THE JOURNAL OF AMERICAN CITIZENSHIP

POLICY REVIEW

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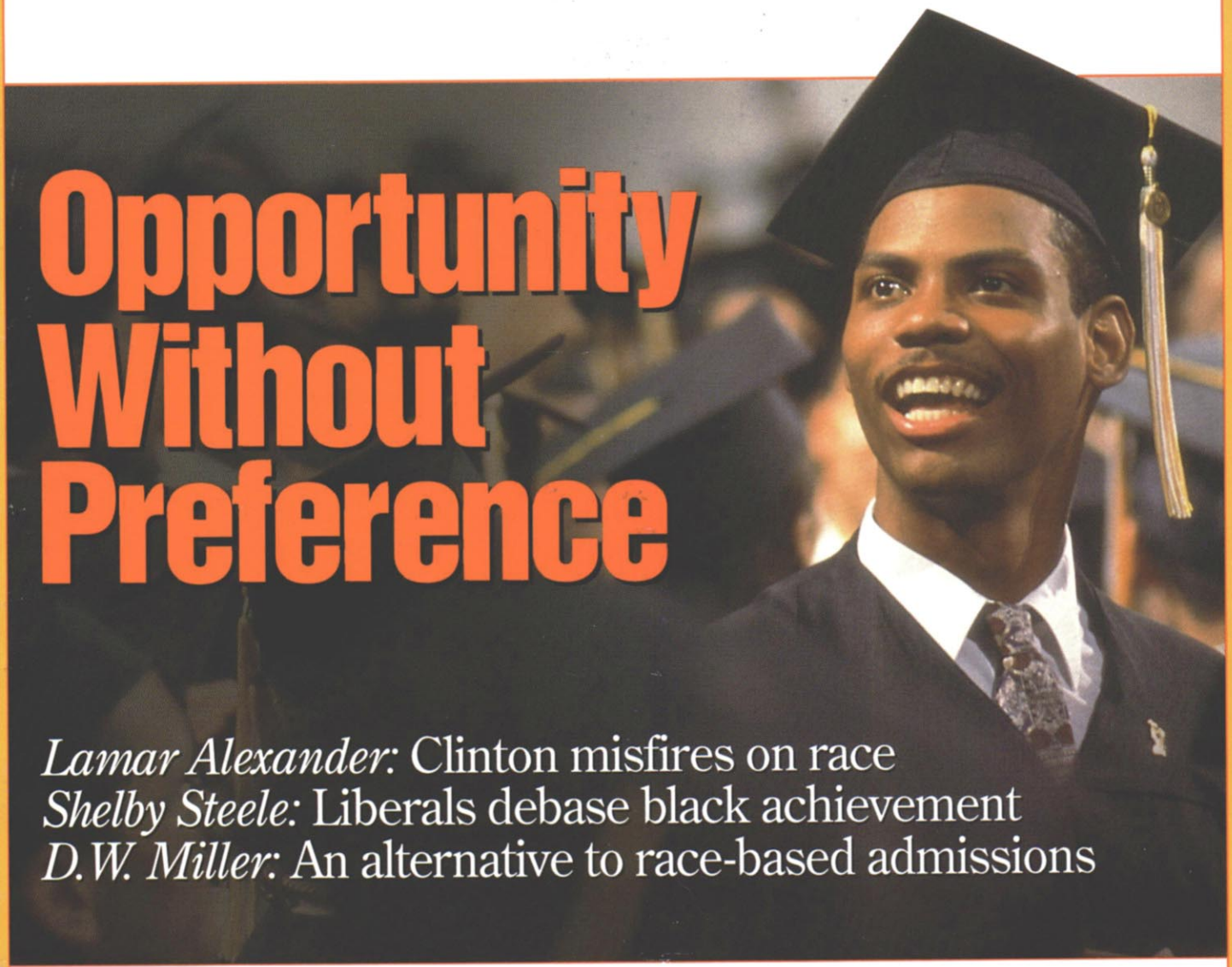
Busing's Boston Massacre



Opportunity Without Preference

Lamar Alexander: Clinton misfires on race
Shelby Steele: Liberals debase black achievement
D.W. Miller: An alternative to race-based admissions

The Bully and the Pulpit

Joe Loconte on a New Model for Church-State Partnerships

Lewd Lyrics and the Law

By Senator Sam Brownback

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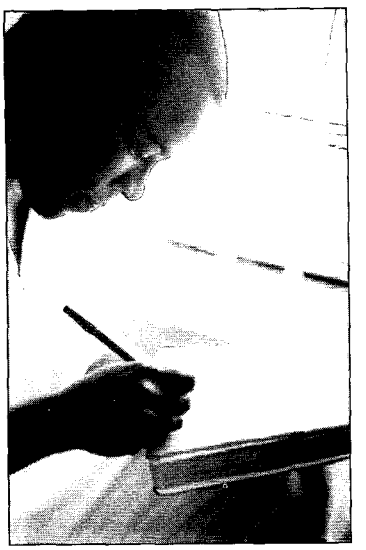

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Cover photo by Stanley Leary / Georgia Institute of Technology

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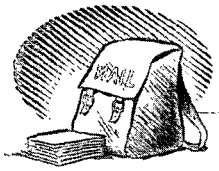

Correspondence

A Texas Tragedy

To the Editor:

Tyce Palmaffy's recent cover story ("Numero Uno," Sept.–Oct. 1998) is an outstanding example of how one man can make a difference in education.

Simply by making it personal, Trujillo reduced the dropout rate among his 47,000 students by 67 percent—that is a difference of 1,000 students. While the drop-out rate is still too high, his approach was not about numbers or percentages; it was about individual students. He focused on saving one child at a time, one day at a time, one week at a time. Trujillo set the standard for urban schools across the country—pass rates in reading tests have risen from 63 to 89 percent, pass rates in math tests jumped from 41 to 86 percent and Ysleta no longer has low-performing schools.

On October 1, Trujillo was dismissed as superintendent of the Ysleta School District. This is a tragedy for the school district, and more importantly, a tragedy for the education and future of the children of El Paso. Unfortunately, the school board played politics with the education of Ysleta's children.

After spending a significant amount of time with Trujillo in early May, I believe he may be the wisest education reformer I have ever met. His vision for students of the Ysleta School District should serve as a model to every school district in America. It is very simple: Every child should graduate bilingually fluent—with English being the base language—and be capable of doing college work. He has recognized that in a modern world market our children should learn English as well as other languages to remain competitive in today's global society. He has a remarkable understanding for what we need to do to help all of our children. I am hopeful that Trujillo will triumph in his appeal and will continue to use his vision and his strategies to make Ysleta a national model for urban education.

Newt Gingrich
Speaker of the House
of Representatives
United States Congress
Washington, D.C.

Bilingual Ed's Failure

To the Editor:

Tyce Palmaffy largely misfired in his support of bilingual education in El Paso, Texas. Any educational program that has all of the right ingredients (dedicated administration and teachers, innovation, and accountability) can succeed. Such success in a bilingual program, however, does not prove that bilingual education is best.

If El Paso chose to use these same assets in the service of English-language development, instead of teaching 90 percent of the first grade in Spanish, its language-minority students would not need to be exempted from being tested in English for three years, as Palmaffy reports.

Bilingualism for all students is a worthwhile goal, but not at the expense of slowing or preventing English acquisition. I would suggest that any approach to bilingualism learn from Dade County, Florida, where all students from grades one through 12 receive one period a day of Spanish-language instruction, but spend the rest of the day learning English. If the goal of programs for language-minority students is rapid English acquisition and integration, then bilingual education fails both in pedagogy and implementation.

Jorge Amselle
Vice President for Education
Center for Equal Opportunity
Washington, D.C.

Tyce Palmaffy responds: In my article, I provided ample evidence of El Paso educators' success in giving their students the academic skills they need as well as teaching them both Spanish and English. Jorge Amselle provides no evidence of their failure, yet he derides their approach anyway. Case closed.

Treatment, Not Needles

To the Editor:

Joe Loconte's excellent article ("Killing Them Softly," July–Aug. 1998) highlights the folly of institutionalizing needle exchange. Is a clean needle better than a used one? Sure it is, and a good number of my patients will go out of their way to buy them from dealers or pharmacies, or get them from diabetic friends. But those who don't get fresh needles themselves are either so crippled by addiction or so generally dysfunctional that they almost surely put themselves at risk for HIV through unsafe sex and syringe-sharing, with or without needle exchanges. These are people who desperately need treatment. The harm-reduction proponents are quick to give lip service to drug treatment, but little more. Why aren't the AIDS activists clamoring for more residential treatment; why isn't George Soros bankrolling a chain of high-quality clinics?

Sally L. Satel, M.D.
Staff Psychiatrist, Oasis Clinic
Washington, D.C.

The Healing Profession

To the Editor:

In addition to questioning the statistical efficacy of needle-exchange programs (NEPs) in reducing AIDS among drug injectors, Joe Loconte castigates the Clinton administration for having "tacitly embraced *a profoundly misguided notion* [emphasis added]: that we must not confront drug abusers on moral or religious grounds."

Not only does moral confrontation not work, but it is also an unconscionable way to try to force sick and suffering people into submission. What does work for addicts are NEPs. By supplying sanitary injection equipment, these programs not only prevent AIDS but also infection by hepatitis B and C and by other, bacterial contaminants.

Nonconfrontational counseling is the first step in restoring broken lives. Together with referrals to both methadone providers and detoxification and abstinence programs, counseling is part of an NEP staff's responsibilities. The program does *not* demean, de-

Letters to the Editor

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Business Manager

base, or stigmatize those it serves by preaching to them or bullying them. It *does* attempt to establish an ongoing relationship built on trust, nonjudgmental acceptance of their addicted state, and protection of client confidentiality. This relationship has the potential for therapeutic intervention as suspicion and hostility on the part of the clients gradually wane.

NEPs offer other medical services such as testing for tuberculosis and hepatitis B and C, as well as referral for the diagnosis and treatment of AIDS and other sexually transmitted diseases. This is the case in New Haven, Connecticut, where a separate van dedicated to providing general health care follows the same route as the NEP vehicle. Such lifesaving efforts can hardly be construed as "misguided."

In his article, Loconte mentions methadone treatment for opiate dependency only once, briefly, with regard to improving the long-term survival of addicts. Methadone is a drug of the opioid class. It is given by mouth in sufficient dosage once a day to *prevent* withdrawal symptoms and *abolish* drug craving. It does not cause a "high," and the oral route of administration eliminates the need for injection. In short, methadone treatment allows the program participants to begin to return to fully functional lifestyles—to take charge of and rebuild their lives with medical, moral, and psychological counseling in an atmosphere of dedication, caring, and hope. Healing broken lives remains one of the great moral quests of medicine.

Henry N. Blansfield, M.D.
Member, Advisory Board
Natl. Alliance of Methadone Advocates
Danbury, Conn.

To the Editor:

Joe Loconte argues that addicts need to "bottom out" to overcome their addictions. This might work for people with money to spend, but for impoverished communities and homeless addicts, "bottoming out" doesn't mean much. What it does mean is that, for every addict who contracts HIV because he lacks sterile syringes, taxpayers will dish out more than $100,000 to watch him die in a hospital or $25,000 per year to keep him alive (not to mention the others he may infect). In the face of AIDS and hepatitis, Loconte's theory—that needle exchange is bad because it reduces the harms of addiction—seems not just misguided and cruel, but downright dangerous to anyone concerned with public health.

Phillip Coffin
New York, N.Y.

Broaden Hispanic Success

To the Editor:

Tyce Palmaffy's optimistic article ("El Millonario Next Door," July–Aug. 1998) glosses over one very serious problem: He recognizes the lack of English proficiency and formal schooling by many Hispanic immigrants and then says, "If all goes well, their children will receive a good education and live easier lives."

The children of wealthy entrepreneurs in the United States will presumably receive excellent educations in elite private schools and learn English, but what about the huddled masses? They are trapped, in many cases, in inner-city schools where standards of academic achievement and English fluency are shockingly low (as the California Stanford 9 tests dramatically show).

One of the culprits is "bilingual education," which shields students from the real world and tragically delays their assimilation to the mainstream of American life. Educrats claim "well-designed bilingual programs" are marvelous and "effective bilingual models" are the key. But, in general, bilingual education (or non-English native language instruction) has lowered standards for teachers and students wherever it goes.

The political and social implications of leaving tens of millions of Hispanics uneducated, disenfranchised, and marginalized could make for a colorful, a stressful, or perhaps a violent future. For this reason, we must eradicate the chaos and bloated mediocrity in our public schools and restore order and high standards *for all students.* If we fail to do this, we cannot count on the 21st century to be one of internal peace and prosperity for anyone, not even the "millonario" next door behind his iron gates.

Ricardo Munro
Bakersfield, Calif.

Correction: The photo of Bill Lann Lee appearing on page 27 of our March–April issue should have been credited to AP / Wide World Photos.

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Laboratories of Democracy

Slashing Through the Regulation Thicket

by Steven Hayward

Steven Hayward, a Bradley Fellow at The Heritage Foundation, is the author of Churchill on Leadership *(Prima Publishing).*

When Indianapolis mayor Stephen Goldsmith set his sights on cutting that city's regulatory code, he thought dog licenses would be an easy target. He was right—it took him just five years to get rid of the dog licensing rules.

The reform of local regulation across the nation is obviously long overdue. "Regulation kills the urban economy with a thousand pinpricks," says Goldsmith. More and more urban leaders are realizing that cutting red tape will revitalize their cities faster than bagging federal grants, gouging taxpayers for new stadiums and convention centers, or bribing large companies not to move. But between the idea and the reality falls the shadow, as T.S. Eliot wrote, and even the most aggressive reform mayors face huge roadblocks to sweeping deregulation.

Two cities are reforming city codes to save taxpayer money and stoke competition.

Upon becoming mayor, Goldsmith discovered that Indianapolis's regulatory code comprised 2,800 single-spaced pages and was filled with obsolete, even comical rules, such as requiring a city license for shooting pigeons or milking cows. Unlike federal regulations, which are promulgated by executive branch agencies, most local rules are city ordinances and cannot be eliminated or reformed by administrative fiat. Mayors must convince city councils to abolish or amend regulations through new ordinances. Unfortunately, anti-competitive special interests and territorial bureaucrats thrive in city council chambers like bacteria in a petri dish. So reform-minded mayors have to prod mulish city councils with the political equivalent of a two-by-four.

Most cities have no idea how much they spend simply administering and enforcing regulations. Many have established some form of regulatory review, but these processes typically assess the costs and benefits of proposed *new* regulations, leaving existing regulations undisturbed. Goldsmith and San Diego mayor Susan Golding have devised ways to open up the entire regulatory code to scrutiny. Both cities provide models for overcoming special-interest resistance and bureaucratic inertia.

Weeding Out

In Indianapolis, Goldsmith established a Regulatory Study Commission with a mandate to scrutinize the whole city code. The commission estimated that the city was spending $125 million a year administering its regulations. Reviewing every rule was impossible, so the commission concentrated on weeding out those that had the largest effect on business owners and citizens. The panel settled quickly upon four areas: taxi regulations, business and occupational licensing rules, development restrictions, and health regulations.

Taxicab regulation in Indianapolis had long followed the familiar anti-competitive story line. Taxis were scarce because the city had issued only 392 licenses, many of which had been "warehoused" by owners to stifle competition. Fewer than 250 actual cabs were prowling the streets, and five cab companies held 80 percent of the licenses. Service was poor and fares were high. The commission proposed sweeping deregulation that lifted the cap on the number of licenses, allowed price competition, and cut arbitrary rules (such a ban on "cruising" for fares) that reduced the market for service.

Mayor Susan Golding prunes San Diego's overgrown regs.

To counter the resistance of entrenched interests, the commission mobilized individuals who favored reform to testify before the city council and educate the news media. The most powerful advocates were minorities who wished to break into the taxi business and disabled people who were harmed by poor service; these groups also helped win the vital support of the Urban League. Especially potent was the testimony of James Chatman, a cab driver for 25 years who had repeatedly been denied a license to operate his own taxi. Prior to the city council vote, Chatman made the rounds of local TV stations to plug deregulation. The city council finally passed the reforms by a vote of 21 to 7. Henceforth the taxi business in Indianapolis will be open to anyone who can secure a driver's license and insurance, meet vehicle safety standards, and pay a $102 fee.

The results were immediate and dramatic. Within 30 days, the number of companies operating taxicabs increased 50 percent. There are now about 70 companies (40 of which are owned by women or minorities) operating 500 taxis. Fares fell by about 10 percent. The average waiting time was cut in half and complaints about service dropped. Taxi drivers are now paragons of civility; it is not unusual to be greeted by a taxi driver wearing a tie instead of shorts and a T-shirt. (For a complete case study of Indianapolis's taxi deregulation, see "Regulatory Reform at the Local Level," a paper by

Illustration by Kathryn Vierra

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Adrian T. Moore and Tom Rose for the Reason Public Policy Institute, available at www.urbanfutures.org/ps238.html.) The Institute for Justice, a D.C.–based public-interest law firm, has opened up Denver's regulated taxi business to minority drivers through litigation and public pressure; another suit is pending on behalf of jitney drivers in New York.

The Regulatory Study Commission also trimmed business licensing regulations and fees. Its "Fair Fees for Business" initiative replaced annual license-fee regulations with a one-time, no-fee registration system, saving small business in Indianapolis more than $500,000 a year. Once again, the commission recruited hundreds of small businesses to express their support for the changes before the city council. Similar reforms of the building code have saved homeowners and builders $750,000 a year in fees. The commission experienced its only significant setback with health regulations, which are controlled not by the mayor and city council, but by an appointed health board not directly answerable to political authority.

San Diego called a moratorium on new rules and began trimming its zoning code by a third.

Regulations Take a Holiday

San Diego has employed a similar approach to stimulate the local economy. San Diego was among those California cities that suffered disproportionately from the cutbacks in military spending and the contraction of the aerospace industry in the early 1990s, when California's economy went over a cliff. In 1993, the year Susan Golding became mayor, *Fortune* magazine ranked San Diego 57th out of 60 major cities in the U.S. for business climate and job creation. Golding was dissatisfied with the usual strategy of targeted business incentives and enterprise zones. "As far as I am concerned," she said in 1994, "none has been radical enough. If you want a great enterprise zone, look at Hong Kong."

Golding started her reform efforts by imposing a one-year moratorium on new regulations and fees. Then she initiated periodic "Regulatory Relief Days," when the city council would review and reform existing regulations. The city is currently trying to trim the zoning code by 140,000 words—or more than a third—including 48 parking requirements, 78 sets of outdoor storage and signage regulations, and 15 different driveway width rules. The city council has adopted the changes and is now fighting a recalcitrant California Coastal Commission, which has final authority over the zoning codes of all coastal cities in the state.

During other Regulatory Relief Days, Golding and the council have modernized the fire code in a way that saves commercial buildings and warehouses thousands of dollars (Philadelphia has made the same reform), eliminated permit requirements for many simple residential construction projects (Indianapolis has made a similar change, eliminating more than 7,000 permits a year), and reduced some environmental reporting requirements.

Rent-Control Tyranny

The most dramatic recent example of deregulation, surprisingly, concerns one of the most absurd urban regulations of all time in one of the most politically correct enclaves in the nation—rent-controlled Cambridge, Massachusetts.

To be sure, the citizens of Cambridge cannot take credit for this reform alone: The voters of Massachusetts did them a favor by voting in 1994 to abolish rent control throughout the state. Since that vote, average rents in Cambridge have doubled to just over $1,000 a month (raising rent toward the metropolitan average from an artificially depressed level). The pace of new residential construction, however, has grown by a third. A clause in the law that deregulated rent control exempted low-income tenants for the first two years, but fewer than 10 percent of existing tenants qualified. This confirmed claims by the critics of rent control that the beneficiaries of rent control were mostly the middle and upper classes (including the mayor of Cambridge, who had lived for 20 years in a rent-controlled apartment costing $421 a month).

"I never would have built [new houses] under rent control," one homebuilder told a reporter. Business activity in the town's restaurants and retail stores is up sharply. Even the *Washington Post* noted in a front-page headline that abolishing rent control gave the city "A New Lease on Life."

The most important lesson from the experience of Indianapolis and San Diego is that reformers must organize public support for deregulation among the people who would benefit most, especially potential entrepreneurs. "New entrants to a market don't exist spontaneously," observes Reason Foundation analyst Adrian Moore. "Reformers need to find potential customers and entrants to the market, and bring them before the city council."

It also helps, says Moore, to create an independent review panel truly committed to reform. Individual agencies are too attached to the status quo, and even the mayor's staff is vulnerable to political and bureaucratic pressure. Along with political savvy, reformers need a review process that evaluates regulations by a consistent analytical method. This makes the process more transparent and accessible to the public. Lastly, urban reformers would do well to subject rules to a periodic review, insert sunset clauses into new regulations, and set limits on the total costs that an agency can impose on private parties. Reformers should note that the last two tactics have pitfalls, but they can still help regulators set more intelligent priorities.

The first U.S. city that seriously emulates Hong Kong will set the standard for prosperity.

Local deregulation is still in its infancy, but the efforts of reformers in Indianapolis and San Diego show that determined leadership can galvanize reform. There is no blitzkrieg in regulatory reform; it is more like trench warfare. But the first U.S. city that seriously emulates Hong Kong will set the standard here for urban revitalization and prosperity. The thriving underground immigrant economies of Los Angeles, Houston, and Miami—the ultimate deregulated markets—show deregulation's enormous potential.

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Vouchers Come Home

Policymakers are finally beginning to recognize that introducing choice to public education will improve schooling. And new, bipartisan legislation in Congress suggests they have learned vouchers aren't just for education: Low-income families are demanding choice in public housing as well. As with educational choice, however, the government has not given up its outmoded thinking—like failed public-housing projects.

Today, more than a million families nationwide live in housing constructed and maintained at government expense. The legacy of this program is the countless high-rise apartment buildings that have become monuments to crime, drugs, joblessness, and hopelessness. As if the struggle facing low-income single mothers isn't hard enough, government policies have trapped many of them in war zones filled with despair.

These public housing projects are among the last crumbling edifices of central planning. Public housing in the United States was born in 1937 when Congress passed the Housing and Community Development Act. The original program offered loan guarantees to subsidize the construction of affordable housing for low-income working families. But it also created housing authorities to run and manage public housing, thus creating a strong constituency for building more and more housing projects.

Fortunately, the federal government offers an alternative: housing vouchers that supplement the rent low-income families pay and permit them to live where they choose. In 1974, Congress passed the Housing and Community Development Act, commonly known as the Section 8 housing assistance program. This program provides rental assistance primarily to families with incomes at or below 50 percent of the area's median income. Families who receive vouchers must pay up to a third of their income in rent; the average is about $163 per month. This "tenant-based" voucher is one of the most popular programs because it allows families to move wherever they choose. Yet, even as Congress moves to expand choice in housing assistance, somehow the government can't seem to shake its faith in publicly owned projects.

Housing policies have left few choices for low-income citizens like Chicagoan Lois Densmore, a long-time resident of the Robert Taylor projects.

Getting the Message

In 1996, under then-Secretary Henry Cisneros, the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) took a step in the right direction by deciding to demolish about 100,000 "severely distressed" public housing units by the year 2003. Although 69,000 units have since been approved for demolition, only 25,000 to 30,000 have actually been torn down. Nevertheless, in most cities where old public-housing projects are coming down, new public housing is going up, albeit in much smaller numbers than before. HUD's goal is to replace about 40,000 of the 100,000 demolished units with new housing and to provide the other 60,000 families with Section 8 housing vouchers.

Chicago illustrates this new HUD policy of mixing vouchers with new public housing. The Chicago Housing Authority (CHA) recently submitted plans to HUD for destroying the city's massive Robert Taylor Homes—28 high-rise buildings once hailed as innovative, but now regarded as one of the worst housing projects in the nation. But even as Chicago plans to destroy some 11,000 public housing units citywide over the next 10 years, it plans to build 2,000 new single-family units in place of the 7,725 apartments in the Robert Taylor Homes. The remaining families will receive vouchers.

Why do public housing authorities insist on building new structures, even as they tear down the old ones? For one thing, they provide construction jobs and money for local businesses, which —to put it delicately—may have supported various public officials. Another reason is that new bureaucrats always think they are smarter than old bureaucrats. Officials today say it was a mistake to concentrate all those low-income families in low-income areas, and it was a mistake to build high-rises that don't match the surrounding architecture. But if we build today's public housing differently, they say, we won't repeat yesterday's problems.

Even as they embrace housing vouchers for the poor, policymakers won't give up on the projects.

Current wisdom says that building a smaller number of single-family units that blend with the local architecture—usually clusters of townhouses—will solve all the old problems. Today's public-housing advocates need to be reminded that many of the housing projects built in the 1940s and 1950s were designed as high-rises because many architects considered tall buildings the wave of the future. Single-family townhouses aren't a refinement of public-housing design; they merely

by Merrill Matthews Jr.

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Photo by Reuters / Scott Olson / Archive Photos

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express the architectural bias of our time. (The only advantage of townhouses is that when the next generation of housing officials recognize their mistake, townhouses will be much easier and cheaper to demolish.)

Another way public-housing authorities hope to avoid the failures of the past is by placing some of the public housing units in higher-income areas, so they have access to safer neighborhoods, better schools, and well-paying jobs. The idea is to help at least a limited number of welfare recipients break the cycle of poverty by moving them out of poverty-stricken areas.

Of course, building low-income housing units in high-income areas also prompts political opposition from homeowners concerned about depressing property values. But the real problem with this approach is that it ignores the needs and preferences of low-income families. For example, those who depend on other family members often prefer to live close to them. Placing low-income parents in high-income areas often separates them from supportive extended families. If mom can't pick up a child after school, grandma may have to drive miles across town.

No Bargain

But these practical concerns are only one part of the public policy problem; the other is financial. It costs a lot more to build a house than it does to help a poor person rent one. Consider the ongoing public-housing controversy in Dallas. In 1995, U.S. District Judge Jerry Buchmeyer ruled in a lawsuit by a group of poor black women that government-sanctioned policies had forced thousands of low-income black families to live in slums. He ordered the Dallas Housing Authority (DHA) to provide Section 8 housing vouchers so that most of these families could live where they wanted. However, he also ordered the DHA to build 474 public housing apartments in predominantly white and higher-income areas, a task the DHA was eager to fulfill.

In addition, the DHA decided to demolish all 3,500 housing units that were the object of the lawsuit, even though it had already spent $20 million renovating them, and build about 950 units in their place. The first 225 of these have recently been completed. The total cost for the new housing, which is still located in low-income, high-crime areas, is expected to reach $57 million, or $60,000 per unit, excluding maintenance and the $20 million in wasted renovations.

But that's a bargain compared to the money Dallas has spent to build housing in higher-income areas. Last May, the DHA opened the first of the court-ordered public-housing projects to be built in higher-income areas of Dallas and its suburbs, and selected families began to move into the 75-unit townhouse complex. The complex alone cost about $4.9 million to build, and to purchase the land the DHA spent $1.3 million, more than $300,000 above than its appraised value. Thus the city spent more than $82,000 per housing unit, excluding ongoing security and maintenance costs.

Of course, the new townhouses will last awhile, so might the expenditure pay off in the long run? The answer is no. One of the main problems with building public housing is that people are encouraged to stay on the public dole. They often—though not always—get nicer, newer homes from the government than they could otherwise afford even with Section 8 vouchers. That acts as a disincentive to find work, because a family that earned enough to lose its public assistance would have to move. Those with housing vouchers, by contrast, could stay where they are; they would just pay full rent.

Welfare reform has been successful at both the state and federal levels because it aspires to move every recipient off welfare within a few years. In other words, cash assistance is temporary. Unfortunately, this policy of time limits has not been extended as aggressively to public housing. With vouchers, however, subsidies could be gradually reduced with rising income, easing the transition off assistance without forcing families to move.

"Tenant Choice"

The desire to bring the benefits of higher-income neighborhoods to low-income families could be extended to more people if the government would tame its urge to build more public housing. For the same amount of money the Dallas Housing Authority spent on building homes for 75 families, it could have provided 200 families with $5,000 a year in housing vouchers for six years. And those families could have lived where they chose rather than where a federal judge said they had to live. Call it "tenant choice."

According to an analysis done by the *Dallas Morning News*, by the end of last March, more than 1,800 low-income families—80 percent of them black—were using Section 8 housing vouchers to live in largely middle-class, white areas of Dallas and its suburbs. Thus, while 75 families are pinned down to one location, 1,800 have the freedom to go wherever jobs, family, or good schools draw them. Fourteen of these low-income families live within blocks of a new 40-unit, court-ordered public-housing project still under construction—at a fraction of the cost of the new townhouses.

The benefits of vouchers to these families are many. They give low-income families the opportunity to move to areas with lower crime, better schools, and cleaner neighborhoods. In addition, vouchers are more compatible with the idea that public-housing assistance, like any type of welfare, should be temporary.

Reforming the welfare system by putting welfare recipients to work and announcing lifetime limits on aid has been a phenomenal success. Nationwide, welfare rolls have declined 42 percent since their peak in 1994, and several states have experienced a drop of 60 percent or more. Yet public housing, which is another way states and the federal government supplement poor families' income, has yet to be addressed sufficiently by welfare reform. Like open-ended entitlements, building public housing implies—and may even encourage—long-term public assistance.

Housing vouchers also facilitate school choice. Although a number of states have proposed school-voucher programs, to give low-income parents the ability to choose better schools for their children, progress has been slow. Too many children remain stuck in bad schools. But until low-income parents receive educational vouchers to pull their children out of a failing school, they may at least be able to use a public-housing voucher to move into a better school district—as many already have. If only federal and state governments and local housing authorities would instead put its construction funds into vouchers, even more low-income families would have the power to make such decisions for themselves.

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The State of the States

Education Update

Cleveland has emulated **Chicago** in placing control of its public schools in the hands of its mayor. After taking over the city's struggling, 77,000-student school system in September, Mayor Michael White swiftly replaced the entire school board and accepted the resignations of 203 senior administrators. The latter will keep their jobs for now, but can be fired at the discretion of a new school chief executive, whom the mayor hopes to name soon. . . . Following a state supreme court ruling that opened the way for **Milwaukee** school-choice participants to enroll in religious schools, several Catholic schools are expanding their enrollment and have waiting lists for the first time in their history. . . . The **Children's Educational Opportunity (CEO) Foundation** has 41 privately funded school-choice programs underway this fall, a 33 percent increase over last year. CEO now provides choice scholarships to about 15,000 students; 45,000 are on the waiting list (see chart). . . . Thanks to the **Children's Scholarship Fund**, 35,000 low-income children will receive more than $140 million in four-year scholarships beginning in September 1999 to attend the K-8 school of their parents' choice. The program will operate in 36 cities and throughout **Arkansas** and **Michigan**. . . . There are now more than 1,200 charter schools in 33 states, serving more than 250,000 students. Nearly three-fourths of charter schools have had to turn away students. At 95 percent of these schools, the proportion of minority students matches or exceeds their proportion in the surrounding community. Most students entering with below-average test scores are performing at or above grade level within a year.

The Gift of Education

The CEO Foundation's scholarship program has flourished since it began in 1991.

Source: CEO America

Welfare Reform Update

A review by the General Accounting Office found that the sharp decline in the welfare caseload has saved states $4.7 billion. The drop in welfare costs has been so rapid that 24 states have left $1.7 billion in federal funds due to them in the U.S. Treasury. Several states are using the unexpected windfall to intensify their efforts to help the "hard cases" get off welfare; **Washington** state has actually increased its welfare spending by 9 percent since 1996. . . . More than 30 states have turned over parts of their welfare systems to private contractors. "It's pretty well universally acknowledged that the old public, federally funded programs have been largely unsuccessful," says Jason Turner, who ran **Wisconsin**'s welfare system before taking over **New York City**'s program earlier this year. . . . Welfare reform is contributing to a sharp rise in income among black single mothers. Between 1993 and 1996, the median income for black single mothers jumped more than 21 percent in inflation-adjusted dollars (according to the Labor Department), faster than almost any other demographic group.

Grades for Governors

The **Cato Institute**'s Stephen Moore and Dean Stansel have published their 1998 "Fiscal Policy Report Card" on America's governors. Only two statehouse occupants earned an A: **Connecticut**'s John Rowland and **South Dakota**'s William Janklow, both Republicans. **New York** governor George Pataki and **Texas** governor George Bush just missed the cut, earning high B's. Three governors earned an F: **Missouri**'s Mel Carnahan, **Florida**'s Lawton Chiles, and **Oregon**'s John Kitzhaber.

Miscellany

What is the most common street name in America? The U.S. Census Bureau has found out, and the answer is straight out of Abbott and Costello. Second Street is the most common name, not First Street. First comes in third, while Third ranks second. Only Fourth comes in where you would expect, while Fifth comes in sixth. The Census Bureau thinks that many towns drop First Street in favor of Main (the seventh-most common name) or name First Street after the town itself. . . . The population flight from central cities is showing signs of reversing. A new **Brookings Institution** survey of 20 large cities finds that 19 out of 20 expect their downtown populations to grow by the year 2010, some by a substantial amount. **Houston** expects a 303 percent increase by 2010, and even **Cleveland**, in the Rust Belt, projects a 228 percent increase. Much of the new population will be aging, empty-nest baby boomers who have decided to return to the central city. Brookings attributes the rise to efforts to make downtown areas into lively entertainment zones. . . . The latest census figures show that one-fifth of the black population of **Washington, D.C.**, has left for the suburbs during the 1990s. Only a 19 percent increase in its Hispanic population has kept D.C.'s total population from falling over a cliff. . . . Twenty-one states now offer some kind of wage subsidy for newly generated jobs, up from eight in 1989. Wage subsidies include income-tax credits, reductions in withholding amounts, or direct rebates. Many wage subsidies were established in the competition to attract corporate relocation or job retention, but have become even more popular as a part of incentives to hire former welfare recipients. . . . Congress may be stalemated on HMO regulation, but according to the National Conference of State Legislatures, 27 states have passed some version of "patient protection" laws in the last two years. One common feature: procedures allowing patients to challenge denial of benefits.

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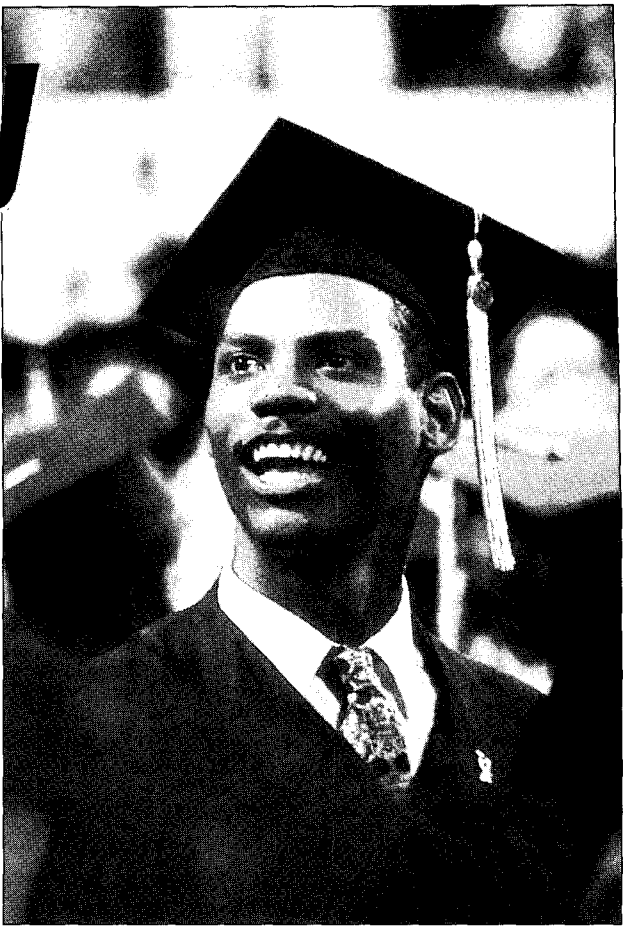
Opportunity Without Preference

Colleges that set the standard for fostering black achievement



By D.W Miller

Would ending racial preferences in college admissions cripple educational opportunity for blacks and other minorities? Most of the U.S. education establishment clearly thinks so. Consider the stance of leading educators at the places where admission preferences are under fiercest attack. In the University of California system, whose regents voted two years ago to end preferences, a group of more than 50 professors called upon students and faculty members to boycott classes for two days in October to protest the "untenable educational environment" created by the regents' decision. In Washington state, where voters face a ballot initiative in November to end preferences in all state institutions, University of Washington president Richard McCormick has said that such a policy would close selective colleges to all but "advantaged white men." And at the University of Michigan, which is being sued on the grounds of racial discrimination by several rejected white applicants, president Lee Bollinger claims the end of preferences will lead to a "return to segregation" in higher education.

Perhaps we would all see things this way, if *preferential access* to selective colleges were truly the only, or even the best, means of providing opportunity to blacks and other minorities. But this approach sends out a racist message that members of some racial and ethnic groups cannot compete on their own merits. And it may end up harming the educational prospects of the very groups that were supposed to benefit. The defenders of preferences have become so wedded to them that they overlook another, and better, approach to affirmative action.

This approach recognizes that the main engine of equal opportunity is *achievement*, and the best way to cultivate it is to raise the aspirations of minorities, demand excellence, reward talent and hard work, and try to clear away obstacles—in short, to foster a *culture of accomplishment.*

Photo by Stanley Leary / Georgia Institute of Technology

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Do Preferences Work?

Racial preferences in admissions are the antithesis of achievement. Because such policies judge members of different ethnic groups by separate academic criteria, they devalue the idea of merit. At public entities they violate the equal protection of the laws guaranteed by the Constitution. And there is reason to question whether they have even achieved their purpose.

After generations of being denied equal educational opportunity, blacks have virtually caught up to whites in the attainment of a high-school education: About 86 percent of both groups have completed high school. About 45 percent of blacks enter college, compared with 55 percent of whites. But too many blacks are not reaching the finishing line: Among those who enroll at a four-year college, about 60 percent of black undergraduates fail to complete a degree within six years, versus 40 percent of whites.

As Stephan and Abigail Thernstrom conclude in their recent book *America in Black and White*, "Affirmative action polices . . . did work to increase enrollments, but if the larger aim was to increase the number of African Americans who could successfully complete college, preferential policies had disappointing, even counterproductive, results." Scholars such as Thomas Sowell have long argued that pervasive racial preferences have actually harmed academic performance by creating a systematic "mismatching" of students with institutions for which they are not prepared. The risk was that many students admitted in this way end up dropping out, which not only interrupts their education but may inflict, in the Thernstroms' words, a "crushing, humiliating personal defeat that may have lasting results."

Under admissions preferences, the nation's more selective colleges have been admitting blacks with considerably lower SAT scores than white enrollees (see chart). These gaps may explain why black students are less likely than others to leave these selective institutions with a degree. At the University of California at Berkeley, the black-white gap in SAT scores reached nearly 290 points under preferences, which surely contributed to a disparity in dropout rates among 1986-89 matriculants of 42 percent for blacks versus 16 percent for whites. At most of the selective colleges about which we have test scores broken down by race, blacks are at least 50 percent more likely to leave without graduating.

Two former university presidents, William Bowen of Princeton and Derek Bok of Harvard, recently published a statistical study that purports to demonstrate the value of such preferences. In this study, the authors take a swing at the "mismatch hypothesis." After compiling data on 45,000 students enrolled in 28 selective colleges, they report that blacks attending the most elite schools among their sample were more likely to graduate than those at the less selective schools. From this they conclude that blacks admitted under preferences with lower grades and test scores than their classmates do not suffer from a mismatch of their abilities with the academic rigor of their alma mater.

The Thernstroms and others, however, have noted several flaws in that conclusion. First, Bowen and Bok never compare educational outcomes for those blacks who got preferences with those who would have been admitted without them. This may mask crucial differences in the groups' fates. Bowen and Bok's own data, however, are perhaps the most damning. The average black student in their sample scores in the bottom quarter of the class. Furthermore, even though graduation rates for blacks at the most selective institutions are high, they still experience a large disparity in their chances of graduating *compared with whites at the same schools*: 25 percent versus 14 percent. Blacks may be more likely to finish at these elite schools

An Academic Mismatch?

Even the most selective colleges in the country, whose black students are relatively likely to graduate, experience large disparities in the graduation rates of blacks and whites. This persistent problem lends credence to the theory that, by allowing in black students less well prepared than their peers for rigorous campuses, preferences contribute to academic failure.

	Black-white gap in freshman SATs	Mean black SAT	Dropout rates (percent) Black	White
Harvard	-95	1,305	5	3
Princeton	-150	1,172	9	5
Brown	-150	1,160	13	6
Pennsylvania	-150	1,135	28	10
Cornell	-162	1,118	23	8
Stanford	-171	1,164	17	6
Northwestern	-180	1,075	21	10
Columbia	-182	1,128	25	12
Duke	-184	1,126	16	5
Dartmouth	-218	1,112	16	4
Virginia	-241	979	16	7
Rice	-271	1,093	26	11
U.C.-Berkeley	-288	947	42	16

Sources: Reprinted from America in Black and White: One Nation, Indivisible, *by Stephan Thernstrom and Abigail Thernstrom (Simon & Schuster, 1997). SAT scores of 1992 matriculants from Theodore Cross,* Journal of Blacks in Higher Education *(Autumn 1994). Dropout rates represent 1986-89 matriculants who fail to graduate within six years; data from National Collegiate Athletic Association.*

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than elsewhere, it seems, but even there they are doing significantly less well there than their peers.

The Challenge Ahead

By fostering a culture of accomplishment rather than peddling preferences, universities will be better equipped to tackle some of the most pressing barriers to equal opportunity. First, our primary and secondary schools are failing to prepare all ethnic groups equally well for college-level work. This failure is reflected in the gap in average SAT scores between college-bound whites and blacks. This gap has narrowed over the last 20 years, but still remains at nearly 100 points on the verbal portion and more than 200 on the math portion. Remedial courses designed to compensate for the disparities in minority student preparation have shown mixed success.

Second, blacks are not being challenged to excel in fields that are financially and professionally rewarding. Although blacks represent about 12 percent of the U.S. workforce, they constitute only about 4 percent of doctors and occupy only 5 percent of jobs in technical fields like engineering, computer science, and scientific research. According to the National Center for Education Statistics, black undergraduates are significantly less likely than whites to major in engineering, biological sciences, or physical sciences, and more likely to major in the social sciences or the humanities. Among American Ph.D. recipients in 1996, according to the National Research Council, only about 1,300, or 5 percent, were African Americans. Most of those doctorates were in "soft" fields such as education, psychology, and humanities, while only 330 or so (25 percent) earned doctorates in science, math, or engineering. (By comparison, 77 percent of doctorates overall were awarded in those fields.)

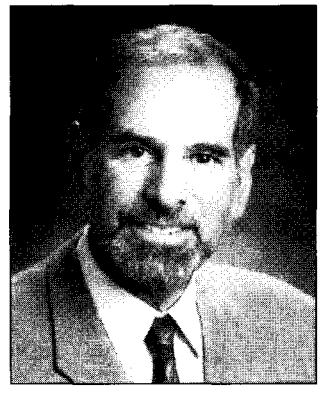
Individual colleges can do more to ensure equal opportunity for minorities in higher education by replacing preferences with efforts to improve the chances that minorities will excel, graduate, and pursue careers in rewarding fields. This isn't a radical idea: Even in universities that sanction racial preferences in admissions, it is possible to find models for fostering a culture of accomplishment among black students.

Widening the Doorway

The latest statistics from the National Science Foundation suggest that two-thirds of all black students who enter college intending to major in math or science will drop out of their programs. Studies suggest that a major leak in the pipeline of minorities into scientific fields occurs during so-called gateway courses, difficult introductory classes in subjects such as basic chemistry or advanced calculus that form the foundation for further study. Many students fail or drop out of these classes and end up switching majors or leaving school. Hence these classes are a major barrier to excelling in scientific fields. Any institution that successfully addressed this problem would quickly widen the doorway for minorities in scientific fields. Thanks to a math professor in Texas, we may have discovered how to do this.

Philip Uri Treisman, a mathematician and education researcher at the University of Texas at Austin (UT), has spent more than 20 years developing a highly effective approach to improving minority students' performance in difficult introductory math courses. As a young graduate student at the University of California at Berkeley in the mid-1970s, Treisman began to investigate the well-known but poorly understood problem that black students in introductory calculus tend to get lower grades and drop out at higher rates than students from other ethnic groups. The result of his research is an approach, known by such names as "Math Workshop" or "Emerging Scholars," that has been duplicated in science and math departments across the country.

The results are compelling. From 1988 through 1997, nearly 800 University of Texas students participated in UT's Emerging Scholars Program (ESP) for freshman calculus. Nearly 60 per-



One of the best approaches to helping minorities master difficult gateway courses to math-based majors is the collaborative "Emerging Scholars" workshop, created by University of Texas math professor Philip Uri Treisman (left). The model is now used in many large state universities, including the University of Illinois at Urbana (below).

Treisman photo courtesy of the Charles A. Dana Center, Univ. of Texas; Illinois photo courtesy of University of Illinois

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cent were black or Hispanic, and many of the rest were whites from rural high schools. In the program's first seven years, about 80 percent earned a B or better in the two-semester freshman calculus sequence, which is the program's measure of academic excellence. These grades were, on average, one-half to one whole letter grade higher than those students not in ESP (even though their level of academic preparation was very similar). Although the program has never had the funding to study whether the program increases the number of minorities majoring in math or the sciences over time, the six-year graduation rate for blacks and Hispanics in the program equals the 64 percent rate for UT students overall, far higher than for UT blacks overall (40 percent) and for UT Hispanics overall (45 percent).

Treisman got similar results at U.C.–Berkeley before moving to Texas. A study of 646 black undergraduates between 1973 and 1984 showed that ESP students outperformed their non-ESP peers with similar or better scores on standardized tests. From 1978 to 1982, 54 percent of ESP students earned an A or a B, compared to only 16 percent of non-ESP students. More importantly, the proportion of ESP students who had graduated from college or were still enrolled—remember, the workshop only covers freshman calculus—was 64 percent compared to 41 percent of their non-workshop peers. Throughout their college careers, the ESP participants generally were more likely to develop academically oriented peer groups, spent more time on homework, and stayed in school at higher rates than those who had not. Another study of minority engineering students enrolled in the math workshops between 1983 and 1995 showed that these students matched the grades of nonminority engineers and exceeded those of minorities not in the workshops by a third of a letter grade on average.

The standard introductory calculus course at Texas consists of three one-hour lectures and two one-hour classes per week. Each summer, the Emerging Scholars Program identifies those incoming freshmen who have expressed an interest in a major requiring math and who belong to one of the targeted groups historically underrepresented in math: minorities, women, and rural residents. ESP students attend the lectures with the other students in the course, but supplement them with three two-hour sessions of group study, in sections of no more than 24 students (rather than 40 in the regular classes). Otherwise, ESP students take the same exams and are graded by the same criteria as other students in class.

In these sessions, ESP students work on problem sets under the guidance of teaching assistants. These problem sets are not remedial; they are designed to be particularly difficult in order to reinforce fundamental concepts, expose weaknesses in students' understanding, and encourage collaboration among students, both in and outside of class.

In a typical session, students work alone for 30 minutes or so before coming together in teams to compare work. The TA offers hints and suggestions when necessary. The problem sets have several purposes: to introduce students to challenging, enriching material that ultimately improves their performance; to instill an appreciation for math that might induce them to major in the subject or consider a career in a math-based subject; to generate confidence in their abilities; to prompt intensive mentoring from more advanced students and faculty. Most important, it teaches them to form a community of fellow learners to get through difficult subjects.

A major leak in the pipeline of minorities into scientific fields occurs during difficult introductory classes that form the basis of further study.

Cramming Alone

It might seem obvious that more rigorous and personalized pedagogy will produce superior performance. But minority students in particular seem disproportionately likely to benefit from this approach.

As a Berkeley graduate student in the 1970s leading a class section in freshman calculus, Treisman found that during the previous decade, 60 percent of blacks who had enrolled in and completed freshman calculus at Berkeley—never mind the dropouts—received Ds or Fs. So he set out to explain why black students were significantly more likely to fail this critical introductory class.

None of the usual chestnuts for explaining black failure at Berkeley seemed to hold up: low income, low motivation, inadequate preparation, or lack of family support. But when they compared the academic behavior of blacks with those of Chinese Americans, an ethnic group with high grades on average, they identified one thing that distinguished the two groups: The blacks almost invariably studied alone. By contrast, most of the Chinese American students got together regularly in the evenings, perhaps over dinner, and compared homework assignments. They offered each other advice, practiced with old exams, and ascertained where each of them stood in class grading. "They had constructed something like a truly academic fraternity," Treisman has said. Black students, says Treisman, did their homework alone, studied only as much as professors told them to—and had no idea where they stood in the class.

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Based on this insight, Treisman created a "workshop" approach that tries to recreate the benefits of integrating academic life with social life—of joining a "community of scholars." In lieu of class sections, workshop students spend six hours a week together, poring over difficult but stimulating problems and probing each other's work. With the help of peers and tutors, they learn to recognize what they don't understand, correct it, and build upon it before the unceasing accumulation of new concepts overwhelms them.

At least a dozen other universities have adapted the approach to their own needs, and well over a hundred have trial programs of some sort based on the approach. At the University of Kentucky at Lexington, for instance, an ESP-type program for freshman calculus called "MathExcel" has produced similar benefits for workshops comprised mostly of minorities, women, and students from rural high schools. In every semester from 1990 to 1996, the average calculus grades of MathExcel participants exceeded that of nonworkshop students; in six semesters out of eight, the difference was a full letter grade or more. The proportion of MathExcel students failing or dropping out—essentially suspending their pursuit of a degree in math, engineering, or physical sciences, among other fields—was generally under 10 percent, much lower than the failure rate for their counterparts of similar skills.

A longitudinal study in the 1980s at California Polytechnic University at Pomona, a commuter school with a lot of Latino students, also demonstrated academic improvement among its math workshop students. Not only were minority students in the ESP far less likely than other minority calculus students to drop out of school or switch majors (15 percent versus 52 percent), but ESP students were also less likely to have to repeat any of the courses in the three-semester calculus sequence, saving students and taxpayers extra tuition fees and financial aid funds. Fewer than one-fifth of ESP students needed five or more quarters to complete the sequence, versus 46 percent of other minority students.

The mathematics workshop model has been applied to gateway courses in other sciences as well, including biology, chemistry, physics, and geology. At the University of California at Davis, a large and diverse state university, the Biology Undergraduate Scholars Program (BUSP) incorporated workshop study groups into its program for boosting the achievement of minorities, mostly low-income and Latino, in the biological sciences. Over the 10-year life of the program, BUSP cohorts have not only bettered the introductory-course grades of their non-BUSP peers by one-half to a full letter grade, but they have also performed better than minority biology majors ever did before the program started. More than a third of the 600-plus BUSP students have graduated with g.p.a.s above 3.0, which make them good candidates for graduate school.

Photo courtesy of the Georgia Institute of Technology

Georgia Tech has become a leading producer of black engineers due in part to a rigorous summer program for incoming freshmen.

Although the workshop approach was developed specifically to bolster mathematical skills, students in a much broader range of majors could benefit from immersion in extra analytical classwork and structured group learning. Treisman advises that the trick to adapting the workshop approach to other fields is locating the conceptual barriers to students' understanding of course content peculiar to each discipline. It took Treisman years of trial and error just to understand how traditional pedagogy for calculus was leaving some students behind. Hence every academic field may need its own trailblazing researchers to adapt it to new disciplines.

Building a Bridge for Freshmen

As a fairly selective public university in Atlanta with a focus on science and engineering, the Georgia Institute of Technology, also known as Georgia Tech, began in the early 1970s to admit many minority students whose high school work left them unprepared for the rigor of its curriculum. Like many schools, it offered a special remedial orientation program for minorities during freshman year. Minority students were singled out for mentoring and counseling for maladjustment to the academic and social demands. Academically, it was considered a failure. Those who came through the program earned freshman-year grades of 2.5 out of 4, compared with 3.0 or so for their peers, and 15 percent of them didn't come back for sophomore year. "In the past we told we told them they were dumb, that they needed fixing, and we had them in remedial programs," then-President John Patrick Crecine told the *New York Times* in 1994.

In 1989, the university scrapped its remedial approach in favor of a rigorous, voluntary four-week summer introduction to the first year called the "Challenge Program." The first years of Challenge have brought impressive gains. Participants' freshman grades rose to above average (around 3.0) and almost no freshman drops out.

The performance gap between minorities and whites in engineering has been eliminated. For mi-

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nority engineers at Georgia Tech, the odds of graduating have risen to 70 percent, nearly double the national average for minority students in engineering departments and about the same as Georgia Tech students overall. Of the 1,230 black or Latino students who graduated in 1997 with engineering degrees, about 190 attended Georgia Tech, second in the nation behind only North Carolina A&T and first among majority-white institutions.

The overhaul was informed by a simple principle: Research at Georgia Tech indicated that first-quarter performance seemed to be a major determinant of a student's odds of graduating. Through bitter experience, the university found that only 60 percent of minority students with a first-quarter g.p.a. between B and C ended up graduating, as did only about 37 percent of those achieving between C and D. So the university set out to ensure that students knew what to expect of the challenging curriculum and how to lift their early grades. Gordon Moore, an alumnus who experienced the remedial approach as a student, now administers the Challenge Program. Says Moore, "The brain power was there, but a lot of students had no concept of how to navigate the system. Our task is to help their assimilation into the Georgia Tech environment."

The university thinks of the Challenge program as the academic equivalent of "pre-season training" in a sport. Enrollment in the voluntary session fluctuates between 100 and 300 each year. Students take immersion classes in college-level calculus and chemistry from the same professors who will be teaching them in the fall. Professors spell out their high expectations of students and describe the intense courseload. Throughout freshman year, academic advisers monitor their students' progress.

Raising the Bar

Many lament the dearth of blacks attending medical school, but the school doing the most to remedy it is practically unknown. Xavier University, a small liberal-arts college in New Orleans, has a unique pedigree as the only private, Catholic, historically black school in the country. It has emerged in recent years as the leading supplier of black undergraduates to the nation's medical schools. In addition, it also produces more black graduates in biology, physical sciences, and chemistry and places more blacks in pharmacy schools than any other college. More than 70 of the 1,100 blacks who entered medical school in the fall of 1997 were Xavier alumni, and the school estimates that in fall 1998 it sent nearly 100 students to medical schools, mainly state schools across the South and Midwest.

At a time when black enrollment at medical schools has actually started to decline, Xavier's success continues to grow. Since the federal court ruling in the *Hopwood* case two years ago eliminated racial preferences at universities in Texas, Louisiana, and Mississippi, Xavier has seen a drop in its med-school admissions only in Texas, and even there its numbers began to recover this year.

Xavier has achieved its results in science education despite having only a modest endowment and fairly average admissions criteria. Remarkably, fully half of its graduates take degrees in a science or health field, even though it has remained close to its liberal-arts roots with a core curriculum of 56 credit hours. President Norm Francis sums up its educational philosophy this way: "Most schools take you out to the middle of the lake and expect you to swim to shore on your own. We put you on the shore and teach you how to swim to the middle."

After Francis appointed J.W. Carmichael, a chemistry professor, to be the pre-med adviser in 1974, Carmichael inspired a comprehensive and successful overhaul of its approach to science and pre-med education. The essence of its approach is a highly structured curriculum and watchful advising system that is designed to ensure that students are not permitted to fall behind. In return, the college expects students to work hard.

A small, historically black, liberal-arts college in New Orleans has managed to become the leading supplier of black undergraduates to medical schools.

Science courses offers students clear goals for learning and frequent tests to ensure they have mastered the material at every step. Each science department, not individual professors, determines the structure and content of lower-level courses, which are standardized within and across departments. This ensures that struggling students can be tutored more effectively and that professors will teach a broad course content beyond their research interests.

To help close the gaps in some students' pre-college preparation, the school created its own science textbooks and workbooks to include daily homework assignments, important vocabulary words, extensive practice tests, and frequent reviews of key concepts. Building on the Treisman approach, the school encourages students to form study groups to exchange help with course material. Academic advisers meet weekly with underclassmen in the sciences to monitor their progress. Free academic tutoring is available. Whenever the school notices a student cutting class or missing assignments, it is likely to call him—or even his parents. Xavier also offers extensive help in applying to graduate school and preparing for graduate admissions tests.

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Xavier doesn't turn average students into superstars: The median scores of its pre-med students taking the Medical College Assessment Test (MCAT) are only par for Louisiana, and a little below average for the nation. But the scores are above the national average for blacks nationwide, and they demonstrate Xavier's knack for boosting minority students to heights they would likely not reach elsewhere.

Francis believes one of the biggest impediments to black achievement in undergraduate science is that blacks are disproportionately likely to graduate from high school lacking proper preparation and good analytic reasoning skills. So for years Xavier has sponsored an annual series of summer problem-solving courses in biology, chemistry, and math for local high-school and junior-high-school students. And in the summer before matriculation at Xavier, science-oriented students are encouraged to take a intensive course in analytic reasoning, called SOAR. The school found that SOAR students were twice as likely as other Xavier students to graduate.

Xavier University's structured science curriculum and custom textbooks give pre-med students a big advantage.

Xavier's hard work is paying off: A 1988 study compared high-ability black high-school graduates (within the top 2 percent of SAT or ACT scores) who enter the biology or chemistry departments at Xavier with a national sample of blacks of similar ability. The Xavier students were twice as likely to get into medical school as other blacks were to get into *any* graduate or professional program.

Bidding Up Achievement

Every year a foundation affiliated with the College Board designates about 800 of the nation's top black high school students "National Achievement Scholars," based on SAT scores and high school records. They are the cream of college-bound blacks, and typically more of them matriculate at Harvard University than at any other school. But for the last seven years, Florida A&M University, a once-obscure, historically black public university in Tallahassee, has vied with Harvard for the number-one spot. Last year, 59 of them came to FAMU.

"Top black students ought to be treated like the top black athletes in America," its president, Frederick Humphries, has said. Humphries has raised the quality of FAMU's student body in part by personally recruiting good students with all the zeal of a Big 10 football coach. He attracts them with his record in delivering training opportunities and job offers from America's leading corporations. An unabashed advocate of the role of historically black colleges, Humphries hopes that his policy of celebrating—and rewarding—black students for their academic potential will set a standard for all colleges.

FAMU has created a culture of success, especially in business management, engineering, and sciences, by aggressively recruiting top students, beefing up the school's departments, emphasizing preprofessional preparation, and offering summer internships for management and technical opportunities with large companies. In the last 13 years, FAMU has more than tripled its enrollment—from 3,200 to 11,000—while raising the average SAT score of entering freshmen from 700 to 1036.

A small but critical part of the FAMU strategy is its "Life Gets Better" scholarships. Each of these scholarships is fully funded by a *Fortune* 500 company, which sponsors students for full tuition and expenses and offers them summer internships throughout college. Many of these students go right to work for their sponsor upon graduation, but it isn't required. At any one time, 100 undergraduates enjoy such scholarships.

One of FAMU's biggest draws is its exemplary preparation for corporate America. Business majors follow a structured course track set up to resemble a corporate job ladder. Freshmen are "hired" as "entry-level employees" and work their way up the "job ladder" as they continue their studies and gain experience operating various enterprises around the campus, such as the shuttle van system. In addition to academic course work, they study office politics, professional behavior, and public speaking, they attend some classes wearing business attire, and they are trained to present themselves with confidence.

FAMU's secret is cultivating close relationships with corporate America. Business majors, who constitute 20 percent of the undergraduate student body, and many nonbusiness majors alike benefit from FAMU's connections to the 120-plus firms its "Industry Cluster." These firms provide hundreds of summer internship opportunities, contribute to

Photo courtesy of Xavier University

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"Top black students ought to be treated like the top black athletes in America," says Florida A&M University president Frederick Humphries.

the school's burgeoning scholarship fund, and offer top executives, including CEOs such as IBM's Louis Gerstner, to teach one-day seminars at FAMU. Professors are required to develop consulting relationships with corporations. As a result, FAMU graduates are among the most sought-after black graduates in the corporate world. Says Joe Wiley, a 20-year recruiter for Monsanto, "These kids are articulate, poised, and focused. They know what they want to do. They're the cream of the crop."

According to Delores Dean, head of career services, FAMU draws 600 companies a year to conduct about 6,000 on-campus interviews. "We consider it a top-tier school," says Lavelle Bond, a long-time recruiter for Procter & Gamble, which hired more than a dozen FAMU engineers and business majors this year. "They have students that come out strong academically and have the professional skills." "We spend $50,000 to train someone," says Donald Thomas, a manager at Occidental in Dallas, which hires two or three FAMU alumni every year. "When you hire a FAMU graduate, you don't have to spend all that money."

Key Lessons

These examples don't begin to exhaust the list of approaches to boosting achievement among blacks and other minorities. Several elite colleges, including Smith and Vassar, are boosting the academic aspirations of talented community-college students who mistakenly believe that a baccalaureate education is beyond their abilities. They have teamed up with community colleges, many of them urban and heavily minority, to expose such promising students to a selective academic environment. More importantly, many universities have taken responsibility for improving the pre-college preparation of low-income minority students. Xavier's SOAR program has counterparts all over the country, including California, where universities run enrichment programs for local, low-income secondary-school students interested in science subjects.

The colleges with a strong record of raising black achievement are those that provide a social framework where achievement is valued.

The experience of these universities suggests some general lessons about boosting achievement among minority students. First, it's important to understand that high achievement is possible—but it's hard work. If "setting high expectations" is not to become a meaningless cliché, it must entail identifying and nurturing those students, even those with deficiencies in their pre-college preparation, who are capable of working hard and pushing them to master undergraduate-level work. By providing preprofessional advising, internships, and research opportunities and by encouraging students to consider graduate studies, the most successful institutions explicitly reinforce the connection between academic effort and later rewards.

Second, these students seem to benefit from a highly structured curriculum. Savvy schools have learned that students are better able to overcome deficiencies in high-school preparation when professors tell them what to expect in each class, set clear and incremental goals for mastering material, and quickly diagnose any need for extra tutoring. The emphasis, at institutions such as the University of Texas and Xavier University, on mastering bottleneck subjects such as calculus and freshman chemistry could be replicated in other disciplines such as economics and even the humanities, where a mastery of writing may be necessary for future success.

Third, majority-white institutions in particular should recognize that fostering a culture of academic achievement among minorities sometimes includes helping students overcome a sense of academic isolation from the rest of the student body. The proponents of the calculus workshop approach to freshman courses say that a cornerstone of their success has been breaking down the tendency of minorities to study alone and to separate their studies from the rest of their campus life. The institutions where blacks thrive are those that create a campus culture in which students integrate academic effort into their social lives.

As the examples of Xavier and FAMU show, this is probably easier at historically black colleges, where neither preferential admissions nor racial separatism is an issue. These two schools have succeeded in creating an entire student climate focused on academic and professional attainment. But most blacks attend majority-white institutions, many of which encourage black students to come together, if at all, in nonacademic pursuits, such as separate student unions or all-black dormitories. There is much we don't know and need to find out about the preparation and performance of minority students. But the colleges with a strong record of raising black academic achievement are those that provide a social framework where such achievement is valued.

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Created Equal

The principles of racial reconciliation

Photo by S.H. Begleiter / Uniphoto

By Lamar Alexander

As the American Century comes to a close, we are losing our ability to say what it means to be an American. We are forgetting the handful of compelling ideas that have forged individuals from so many backgrounds into one nation, indivisible. The optimistic sense of national purpose that helped our parents and grandparents survive a depression, win a world war, and shoot for the moon is giving way to pessimistic identity politics.

We are Italian-American, Chinese-American, African-American, Scots-Irish-American—there are so many hyphenated versions of us we can hardly keep count. We cherish our regional accents, research our family roots, and burst with pride at ethnic dinners. We are proud of where we have arrived from, and rightly so, but we are forgetting that we have always been prouder of where we have arrived; prouder of saying, "We are all Americans."

America is a great country not because we are the world's largest collection of ethnic groups, but because we are a remarkable collection of individuals who share a few principles that make us one nation. One reason we are pulling apart as a country is that we are increasingly preoccupied with the differences that divide us instead of the principles that unite us.

The latest symptom of this divisive tendency is President Clinton's Commission on Race. Last month, it issued its final report, the culmination of 14 months of "dialogue" involving 17,000 Americans in 39 states. Despite its title, "One America in the 21st Century," its central finding is that America suffers from too little race-consciousness. And its recommended remedy? More race-consciousness. Before issuing his report, commission chairman John Hope Franklin wrote to the president: "The idea that we should aspire to a color-blind society is an impediment to reducing racial stereotyping. . . . The best way to reduce racial stereotyping is to be conscious of racial differences."

The report recommends that the president make this all-race-all-the-time approach to national unity permanent by institutionalizing his commission on race. The proposed "President's Council for One America" would pick up where the commission left off: carrying on the "great and unprecedented conversation about race."

This is the wrong conversation. I understand where the president is coming from, considering where he grew up, and where John Hope Franklin

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grew up, and where I grew up. No southerner who has experienced the indignity of black Americans being pushed to the back of the bus, sent to separate hospitals, relegated to separate bathrooms, and kept out of many of the best schools and colleges because of their race can remain indifferent to the legacy of discrimination. And no one can look at our elite college campuses today, at the boardrooms of *Fortune* 500 companies, and at those who seem permanently consigned to lower-paying jobs, without wanting to open opportunity to Americans of all races.

But the president has started the wrong conversation. With all due respect, he has the wrong ideas about what it means to be an American. In his 1997 State of the Union address, the president said America's greatest strength is its diversity. He must have been the first president of the United States ever to say that, and I hope he will be the last.

Of course diversity can be a great strength. But diversity is not America's greatest strength. Bosnia is diverse. Rwanda is diverse. Quebec is diverse. Racial and ethnic differences are tearing those places apart. America's greatest strength is that we are the only nation that, as Margaret Thatcher observed, "has so successfully combined people of so many different races and nations within a single culture."

So shouldn't our national conversation be about what pulls us together instead of what pulls us apart? Think about the times when America has been at her best: winning our freedom at Lexington and Concord, defending that freedom on the beaches of Normandy, and marching together in Selma, Alabama, to secure freedoms for every American. During those times we united around a common set of principles: equal opportunity, individual rights, self-government. From these principles flows the path to racial reconciliation.

Five Questions

So let me propose that the president go ahead with his new Council for One America, but stop wallowing in what divides us and start celebrating what unites us. Let me suggest five challenging topics, one for each of the first five meetings of the new council, and make recommendations that would help bring us together as one nation.

How do we make good on the promise of equal opportunity?

To be an American means that each one of us has an equal opportunity at the starting line to pursue the American Dream. This promise of American life is right there in our nation's birth certificate, the Declaration of Independence: "All men are created equal."

To make good on this promise 44 years ago, the U.S. Supreme Court, in *Brown vs. Board of Education*, opened schoolhouse doors that had been closed to blacks on the basis of their race. To make good on this promise today, the president's council should recommend that Congress create Hope Scholarships for Children so that middle- and low-income families can send their children to good, safe neighborhood schools of their choice—public, private, or religious. As Diane Ravitch has written, no poor child should have to go to a bad public school.

The council should also say unequivocally that it is time for the government to stop making distinctions based on race. No discrimination; no preferences—period. Let me give you two personal examples of why I believe this.

Our "national conversation on race" should be about what unites us as a nation, not what pulls us apart.

In 1962, when I was a senior at Vanderbilt University in Nashville, I was among those who fought successfully to change the rules of admission. At that time the university refused to admit African Americans. Racism was the rule. Nearly 30 years later, on my first day as President Bush's Secretary of Education, I was presented with this eerily familiar question: Is it right for the government to grant college scholarships solely on the basis of race?

I said no. We should provide scholarships for low-income Americans of every race, yes. But scholarships based solely on race, no. If we want to be one country, I do not see how we can consider a group of students and say, "I have a scholarship for the Chinese American, but not for African Americans; I have one for the Irish American but not one for the young woman whose parents came from Chile." Scholarships should be for every student who needs help, without regard to race.

It's time to acknowledge that for the last 30 years we have made a mess of race relations by trying to label each other and by trying to end discrimination through new forms of discrimination. Forced cross-town busing for racial balance has done more harm than good to our schools, our children, and our communities. As a former university president, I have seen how racial preferences placed students into colleges for which they were unprepared. On the other hand, I have seen that when our own state raised college admission standards, minority students arrived better prepared—and more were able to succeed.

At the university, I saw that race-based affirmative action did not succeed in making our college campuses look more like our country. And looking into America's past, I saw how today's stepladder can become tomorrow's ceiling. Discriminatory

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admissions policies once set upper limits on the number of Jews at Dartmouth and the number of Asians at Berkeley. I believe opportunity in America means stepladders without a ceiling.

How do we restore support for our common language?

Being an American must mean mastering our common language. On his famous journey through America in the early 1800s, Alexis de Tocqueville wrote, "The tie of language is perhaps the strongest and most durable that can unite mankind." It should be obvious that if we want to be one country, we must be able to talk to each other; to talk with each other, we must have a common language. But somehow this principle has become controversial, so much so that the people of California had to resort to passing a ballot initiative to require the state's public schools to teach all the children America's common language.

The Council for One America should recommend ending failed bilingual-education programs that deprive millions of children of their ticket to success.

Proficiency in English has always been a requirement for citizenship, because it is indispensable to success in this country. The president's council should recommend unequivocally ending failed bilingual-education programs that deprive millions of children of their ticket to success. Then the council should go one step farther: Take the money spent on bilingual programs and fund "English for the Children" scholarships for middle- and low-income families. Parents could use these scholarships at public schools, private schools, after-school programs, or any other accredited program they believe will help their child learn English.

Since millions of adults also need help learning English, the council should recommend that Congress charter a public/private bank, the English USA Corporation, to offer a loan to anyone who needs help learning English. This loan could be paid back over the long term by the borrower and by private donations from those who believe that encouraging a common language is essential to making America one country.

How can we express an optimistic view of immigration and still control our borders?

To be an American means to be proud that this is a nation of immigrants.

Virtually every American family, if it looks back far enough, has a similar story: immigrants coming to the New World, working together, praying together, and sacrificing so that their children would have a better life than they had.

We lose this generous view of immigration when we view immigration through the prism of race. Seeing new Americans simply as members of different racial and ethnic groups polarizes us around two divisive and equally incorrect extremes. On the one side are the ideologues of the Right who claim that many (if not most) immigrants are incapable of assimilating to American culture and that it is time to close the doors to new immigration. On the other side are the ideologues of the Left who say there is no such thing as American culture and who equate assimilation with a loss of personal identity.

The president's council could help by rejecting both extremes and recommending a two-pronged approach that embraces immigration as a principle of national unity. First, it should maintain the distinction in our laws and our minds between those who are legally here—paying taxes, following the rules—and those who are here illegally. That means replace the Immigration and Naturalization Service with a consolidated new federal effort to stop illegal immigration. Second, because of the larger number of new Americans today, we should work harder to help immigrants become Americans. Being an American is not a matter of looking the same, or having grandparents from the same part of the world; it is a matter of believing in common principles. In *The Unmaking of Americans*, John J. Miller describes the process as "Americanization." First, one learns English, and then one learns the handful of ideas that form the core of the American identity: freedom, individual rights, equality under the law, hard work, and the importance of good character.

How do we save our greatest unifying institution, the public school, while ensuring that no child is forced to go to a bad public school?

To promote Americanization, we must have the best possible system of public schools. In the late 1980s, I was attending a conference of business leaders and educators when Notre Dame president "Monk" Malloy brought the discussion to a complete stop by posing this question: "What is the rationale for the public school?" After what seemed like an eternity of embarrassed silence, the late Albert Shanker, the president of the American Federation of Teachers, provided the answer: to teach children what it means to be an American.

Shanker was right. The common school was created a century and a half ago to teach children—especially immigrant children—to read and speak English, to form good character, and to understand what it means to be an American. In

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1941, the National Education Association even published *The American Citizen's Handbook*, a virtual user's guide to America that included everything from the Future Farmers of America Creed to the Gettysburg Address.

The President's Council for One America should reaffirm America's commitment to a strong system of public education—and to a curriculum that helps teach children their legacy as Americans. It could start by explaining why the motto on our national seal, created by the committee of Benjamin Franklin, John Adams, and Thomas Jefferson, is *E Pluribus Unum*, "out of many, one," and not "out of one, many."

In addition, the council should recommend that over time our country create New Public Schools. By this I do not necessarily mean new buildings, or new students and teachers, but reborn institutions, with a new spirit and new ways of doing things. The organizing principles of these New Public Schools should be the same as those that helped American colleges become the best in the world: autonomy and choice. To ensure autonomy, every public school should have the same freedom from union rules and government regulations that charter schools have. Good teachers should be paid more, and teacher tenure as we know it should end. And the Hope Scholarships would allow every child to enter a good, safe school—public or private—of his or her choice.

How do we challenge and encourage a new age of responsibility?

American citizenship guarantees rights, yes, but also confers responsibilities. Unfortunately, as Newton Minow has said, we are becoming a nation in which everyone has a right and nobody has a responsibility. This is what happens when you are afraid to say that some things are right and some things are wrong. Standards are under attack by moral relativists who believe what is right and what is wrong depends on whom you ask. And these people who say there are no common standards are usually the same ones who say there are no principles that unite us as a nation. But when we let go of our standards and abdicate our responsibilities, someone else—usually the government—gains greater control over our lives.

Although our sense of right and wrong comes from many sources, the first and most important source is our family. Twenty years ago, Americans suffered from a rising "misery index," a painful combination of inflation and unemployment. Today the new misery index is an even more painful sum of statistics about broken families and troubled children.

One reason for this is that, for the last 30 years, our government and our culture have declared war on the family by paying people not to marry, by penalizing those who do, and by making divorce easier, adoption harder, and household discipline illegal. During that time, the federal tax burden on families with children has increased by five times, from 5 percent of income to 25 percent. We are depriving millions of children of a good education and have all but given up in the war on drugs. The media elite has piled on, telling us that marriage is unnecessary, fathers are old-fashioned, and Jerry Springer is an acceptable successor to Captain Kangaroo.

The president's Council for One America should recommend that our society place a higher value on the work of parents raising children, that we learn again to honor the job of father and mother. We should triple the tax deduction for each child to $8,000, restoring its former value. End the marriage penalty. Create education savings accounts to help parents pay for school and college and create Individual Security Accounts to help them save for retirement and for the care of older relatives.

The council's final admonition should be addressed to us parents: Government can't raise children, only we can. Only we can turn off the TV, read to toddlers, and teach our children the standards to live by. Only we can teach new generations that children having children is wrong, and that marriage before childbirth is right, and that *both* parents have a responsibility to nurture their child until adulthood. Only we can insist that our athletes and our politicians, right on up to the president, act as role models for our children.

Our parents' and grandparents' legacy is secure. Their struggle for freedom created the American Century. The question is: What will our legacy be, a hundred years from now? I want it to be that we began the new century with an era of responsibility that secured those freedoms and united our country. Our parents made it their business to try to understand what was right, what was wrong, and what it meant to be an American. They taught us that from suffering comes endurance and from endurance comes character and from character comes hope. If we accept our responsibilities as well as they accepted theirs, then we, the parents of this generation, can help to create a new American Century as glorious as this one.

The legacy of our generation ought to be that we began the new century with an era of responsibility that secured our freedoms and united our country.

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How Liberals Debase Black Achievement

Liberalism is more preoccupied with seeking redemption for the shame of racism than with attaining self-sufficiency and equality for blacks

By Shelby Steele

At a friend's house for dinner not long ago, I met a newly retired doctor who shook my hand and forthrightly announced, "I am very proud to be a liberal." Though his smile defused some of the challenge in this statement, it did not defuse it all. Someone had told him I was a conservative, and this seemed genuinely to disturb him. He had a great shock of pure white hair, wire-rimmed glasses, and, except for his fierce blue eyes, looked like Hollywood's idea of a friendly country doctor. At dinner he sat next to me and, as the salad arrived, he began to make his case for liberalism. But it was not a theoretical case, not an argument for a utopia of some kind. Right from the start it was essentially a case for black helplessness.

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He argued for this as if for his own decency. And it was axiomatic to his argument that blacks were unable to achieve true equality with other races on their own. Their helplessness was the result of, and proof of, a great human indifference in the American soul. And this was the second theme of his argument, this idea of the United States as an instinctively oppressive country. There was this blight of racism and black suffering, and then there was the government, the only "reliable force for compassion" that we had. At least three times he told me that Colin Powell would never have made it without government-sponsored affirmative action.

Even Colin Powell's success was, for him, *contingent* on the intervention of a compassionate agent. And I would not have minded this so much had there been at least some recognition of Colin Powell's talents and abilities. But he spoke as though Powell had merely been levitated to great heights by interventions that good Americans like himself had insisted on. In his formulation of liberalism, black people were inert and invisible. And they faced a racism that was so monolithic and impenetrable that they could not be active agents in their own uplift.

His liberalism did not come from a human identification with black people. For him there was the racism in America's soul and then the interventions to contain it. The unintended consequences of these interventions for the people they were designed to help were not a consideration. After all, he made it clear that he had never "personally known" many blacks in the first place, so he would not have been sensitive to whatever unintended consequences they endured. I think it was primarily America's racial shame that troubled him, and that he felt diminished by. Interventionism was his passion because it was an action against this shame that joined morality and ingenuity in a way that made a "structural" moral activism possible. But, from where I sat, it also left him with a familiar white liberal dilemma: What redeemed him by positioning him against the evil of racism also had many debilitating effects on the people who had suffered from racism in the first place.

Racial Virtuousness

A fundamental weakness of post-1960s liberalism has been its greater preoccupation with national redemption than with what it actually takes for blacks to achieve self-sufficiency and equality. The great ingenuity of interventions like affirmative action has not been that they give Americans a way to identify with the struggle of blacks, but that they give them a way to identify with racial virtuousness *quite apart* from blacks.

None of this is to say that the doctor sitting next to me at dinner that night was a hypocrite, or that white liberals generally are hypocrites. The doctor was old enough to have lived half his life in the segregationist era. He would have had knowledge of himself benefiting from segregation or looking away from it or rationalizing it. And added to this would be that peculiar late-20th-century knowledge of the extraordinary human devastation that simple complicity can make possible. It is a mistake to think that only blacks truly know segregation. Whites know it, too, not as its victims or even very many as its open perpetrators. But it made whites know—on some level—how simple a thing evil is, how ordinary, how close at hand, how compellingly convenient it can be. This kind of knowledge makes for its own urgency—an urgency coming out of the white experience of segregation and racism. And in the United States this is the urgency that parallels, but then diverges from, the urgency that blacks feel for full equality. Two experiences of American racism, and two kinds of redemption needed—one from the shame of living with or practicing racism, the other from the shame of being subjugated by it.

I believe it is the former urgency that drives the liberalism of people like the doctor. When he announces provocatively that he is a liberal, when he defends interventions like affirmative action on mere faith, he argues that it is to help blacks, but of course it is really the other redemption he wants, the white redemption. His sense of urgency, and his impatience with me, come from a white pain and knowledge. And when he mentions in passing that his mother was a racist, and that the

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very neighborhood we are dining in had restrictive covenants against blacks and Jews when he joined a local medical practice, I understand that he is telling me, without saying so directly, that I don't know how close evil is. He feels an accountability to that evil. And he seems almost to be saying that interventions, like group preferences, are not just for blacks and don't have to work just for blacks.

A great confusion in American liberalism after the 1960s comes from the fact that the white mandate for redemption can only fulfill itself through a concern for black equality. This has given us a liberalism that treats black equality more as a means to white moral authority than as an end in its own right.

Double standards and preferential treatment constitute a pattern of exceptionalism that keeps blacks down by tolerating weakness.

So we often end up evaluating racial reform more by its usefulness to the moral profile of whites than by how well it develops blacks. Universities across the country offer admission preferences to black students, yet this student group has the highest dropout rate and lowest grade-point average of any student group. If black equality were truly the goal, wouldn't policy focus on educational development before college? And if equality of performance between blacks and whites were the goal, wouldn't blacks be held to the same standards as whites precisely so they could achieve that equality?

The Helpless Black

This same white need for moral authority has also given government and other institutions an obsession with an equality of results. An equality of colors and numbers, a language of "diversity" and "multiculturalism," lets institutions engineer the beautiful picture of equality while pushing aside the black need to develop it.

But then, once in the color-and-numbers game, the full and complex humanity of blacks—who they really are and what they really need—becomes inconvenient. And this is where the pursuit of moral authority ends in something both pernicious and paradoxical. In the world of interventionism, with all its schemes, formulas, and structural manipulations, blacks are relegated to that most alienated of human categories, "the other." Here they are seen as a different kind of humanity, as essentially unlike "mainstream" white humanity. And the essence of this "otherness" is their injuredness and helplessness. Because the interventions are justified by, and respond to, only these qualities, helplessness becomes the identity they are recognized for. It is the identity that makes them useful in the larger drama of white institutional redemption. In a sense otherness and inferiority now bring entree where they once caused exclusion. But in both cases—white racism or white redemption—blacks remain largely invisible beyond a presumed inferiority.

In post-1960s liberalism it is virtuous to be tolerant of black weakness and to think of blacks as "helpless others" as a way of acknowledging the historic evil of white racism. In other words, this liberalism tolerates black weakness and inferiority because they are the *result* of white evil. The liberal who has high expectations for his or her own children often feels that he or she cannot "push the issue" with blacks. The white mandate for redemption pressures the liberal to tolerate what holds blacks down. And, in this circuitous way, this liberalism endorses a kind of racism.

Double standards, preferential treatment, provisions for "cultural difference," and various kinds of entitlement all constitute a pattern of exceptionalism that keeps blacks (and other minorities) down by tolerating weakness at every juncture where strength is expected of others.

The Costs of White Intervention

A question I did not think to ask the doctor that night was whether he would have announced himself so provocatively as a liberal if he'd been warned that he was going to meet a white conservative. Somehow I doubt that he would have revealed his politics, or gone on about the power of racism and the helplessness of blacks if I were a white conservative. It was the idea of a *black* conservative that provoked him. And well it should have. The idea of a black openly outside the framework of liberalism is still odd in the United States. Such a person seems to be disqualifying himself from the fruits of America's struggle for racial redemption, standing against his own racial self-interest. And so the doctor argued *for* black helplessness and the ubiquity of racism as a way of informing me of my self-interest—and perhaps of protecting his own. He said, in effect, that in a context of black helplessness and white racism, preferential treatment is a form of fairness. It offsets the inferiority of one race and the evil of the other. A practical sort of justice.

And he was right, as long as the self-interest of blacks is defined by the self-interest of institutions that want redemption. I believe that preferential treatment is essentially a white liberal idea of black self-interest that serves institutions by letting them practice exceptionalism with blacks. The institution gets its virtue-credit, but blacks have their weakness tolerated rather than their strength rewarded. Then, after black weakness has been massaged, accepted, understood, and felt for, people wonder why the infamous gap between blacks and

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whites on tests and other performance measures won't close. The answer, of course, is that nobody seriously *asks* that it be closed. A defining paradox of post-1960s liberalism is the symbiotic bond between the moral authority of America's institutions and black inferiority.

It didn't help matters for me that the doctor could point to the entire civil rights leadership as supporting interventionism—his practical sort of justice. From the abolitionist era to the present, the terms of racial reform in America have always been set by a coalition of white liberals and black leaders. And since the 1960s, interventionism that would engineer blacks to equality has been the virtuous idea of this coalition. But, in supporting interventionism, I think the black leadership has forsaken the black mandate to achieve true and full equality with all others for the perquisites of interventionism—the preferential patronage of jobs, careers, grant money, set-asides, diversity consulting businesses, black political districts, and so on. The black leadership, which could have emphasized anti-discrimination and black development as the road to black advancement, chose instead to rely primarily on group preferences and entitlements. This bargain has transformed the civil rights establishment into something of a grievance elite, largely concerned with turning the exceptionalism practiced by institutions in regard to blacks into the patronage of racial preferences.

Of course it is true that interventionism is what white society offered blacks (rather than serious anti-discrimination and development) because the redeeming look of equality could more easily be engineered this way. And the black leadership, coming out of segregation, in which whites had never given much of anything to the black cause, quickly grabbed up interventionism as a valid way to equality. Thus, for entirely opportune reasons, this post-1960s coalition of white liberals and black leaders made equality into a near perfect expediency with no relationship to a human equivalency between the races. As such it could be manufactured without the actual development of blacks to equality.

This meant that the doctor spoke with the authority of the civil rights leadership on his side. It also meant that he spoke with more official "black" authority than I did. And this authority confirmed for him that interventions were the only road to white redemption. Worse, there was the implication that if he sided with me—if he subscribed to anti-discrimination and black development over interventionism—his redemption would be withheld. And, by the odd mathematics of American racial politics, he might thereby be counted a racist. This, of course, is the white liberal's crucible—he gets to define America's racial reform as interventionism, but he lives without even enough moral authority to declare himself racially innocent and have the declaration stand.

So when a white liberal and a black conservative meet, there isn't much business to be done. And the problem is not just in our different mandates. For example, I not only admire the white mandate, but I also admire the white liberal for recognizing it and taking it seriously. This is what I admired in the doctor, his acceptance of this mandate, his understanding that history had given white Americans the responsibility of overcoming racism. What I didn't admire in him—and post-1960s white liberals generally—was the moral self-preoccupation. This is what made them dangerous to blacks—ready to give them over to an "otherness" in which nothing is expected of them. The liberal may feel that the black conservative doesn't give him credit for his moral sensibility, but this is not true. The black conservative appreciates the sensibility but resents the moral selfishness.

Black Conservatism, White Redemption

One of the great attractions of "conservatism" for blacks today is the freedom it offers from yet another white mandate—not white supremacy but white redemption.

History imposes these mandates on whites and blacks in the form of responsibilities that individuals in each group carry as a part of their racial identity. They are, I believe, absolute. They are more often denied than not by both whites and blacks, but even the denial validates their presence. Today the mere knowledge of what whites did to blacks in history makes whites responsible for showing a moral superiority to their race's behavior in the past. The doctor I met, for example, must show himself far beyond the racism of his mother. Correspondingly, the mere knowledge of an historically imposed inferiority makes blacks today responsible for showing an equality of achievement that their forebears were prevented from showing. History defines our identities as much by the collective responsibilities it imposes as by the selected tales of glory we take pride in. And these two mandated responsibilities—white redemption and black equality—may be unwelcome and will often seem irrational, yet they are at the heart of what it means to be white and black in the United States.

Black leaders have forsaken their mandate to achieve full equality for the perquisites of interventionism—preferential patronage of jobs, careers, grant money, set-asides, diversity consulting businesses, and so on.

But all this is a problem for the white liberal be-

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cause he distinguishes himself from other whites by the *intensity* of his responsibility to the mandate. This intensity is his identity as a white liberal. He is not just accepting of this responsibility, he is passionate about it. Passionate moral responsibility is his trademark. Probably this is because passion seems the only correct response to great historical injustice, the least one can offer in payment for redemption. But the problem with an identity based on passion is that it often puts one at odds with reason and common sense.

However, an important qualification must be made here. Though the liberal identity calls for passion, real social passion is all but impossible to sustain over time. And so, like religious fervor, it must be codified into manners and practices so that the liberal can "genuflect." These genuflections, then, are the ritualized display of passionate responsibility to the white mandate of redemption. And this, as it were, is not a bad definition of "political correctness." The great problem this poses for liberalism, as for religion, is that when the original passion is reduced to genuflection, it is achieved more by mere conformity than by difficult effort. This introduces the same hollowness into liberalism that is the bane of organized religion—passion as conformity, iconography, and empty observance.

This has made post-1960s liberalism essentially a *received* doctrine, more autocratic than democratic. Amorphous and empty ideas like multiculturalism and diversity do not exist to be defined or debated so much as affirmed as received expressions of virtue. When the California regents voted to end group preferences at the University of California, the president of the University of Michigan announced that he would resign if preferences were voted out on his campus. I think this was more genuflection than reflection, more obeisance than deliberation—the testimony of a man operating inside a received liberalism in which all is resolved and only affirmation is left to him. With no fear of having to back up his threat, he was able easily to display his passionate responsibility to the white redemptive mandate.

The ritualization of liberal passion has hardened it into a brittle mask. CEOs, foundation presidents, government officials, educators, politicians, union leaders, and the man and woman in the street—all can wear the mask of the racial progressive. In a received liberalism of genuflection, true reform itself is simply not necessary.

One of the serious problems that this overall rigidity has brought to post-1960s liberalism is a confusion between its broad mandate and the means it uses to achieve it—that is, the assumption that a given intervention is the same thing as the white mandate for redemption. And from this confusion comes the liberal tendency to fight for interventions as though fighting for redemption itself, never realizing that there might be many routes to the fulfillment of this mandate.

The "Glazer Trap"

I will call this confusion the "Glazer trap" in honor of the social critic Nathan Glazer, a man whose work I have often admired. Back in the mid-1970s, in a famous book called *Affirmative Discrimination*, Nathan Glazer launched one of the first thoughtful attacks on affirmative action. He was ahead of his time in arguing openly that affirmative action had moved dangerously from "equal opportunity to statistical parity." Like other neoconservatives, Glazer was a liberal who had become disenchanted with affirmative action as an intervention. He was not against the white mandate per se, the idea that restored moral authority in the United States would require serious racial reform. His objection, quite reasonably, was to the intervention of affirmative action as a *means* to that mandate.

But, flashing forward 20 years to the 1990s, we see that the world has begun to catch up to *Affirmative Discrimination.* Now preferential affirmative action is under serious assault. The state of California has voted against group preferences in the nation's first referendum on the issue. Exit polls from that election day show that almost 30 percent of blacks voted against preferences. And suddenly, in this atmosphere, Nathan Glazer came out in favor of preferential affirmative action, the selfsame man who had launched the movement against it. Why? The reason he gives in an odd *Wall Street Journal* op-ed piece is that the withdrawal of preferential affirmative action would constitute a "rejection" of blacks. Elsewhere he says that the number of black students would decline significantly at elite universities. If this is not racism, it is certainly paternalism, since the first reason presumes to protect black "feelings" and the second accepts an apparently permanent black inferiority that will always have to be accounted for.

Amorphous and empty ideas like multiculturalism and diversity do not exist to be defined or debated so much as affirmed as received expressions of virtue.

However, I sense another reason behind Glazer's recantation: that he has confused the specific intervention of preferential affirmative action with the white mandate to win redemption through racial reform. Glazer forgot the very distinction between mandate and means on which his own book was predicated. What made that book important was the fact that it was not written by a person who rejected the white mandate. To the contrary, its authority came from the fact that Glazer *was* an old-

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line liberal who clearly wanted America to restore its moral authority through racial reform, and who wanted blacks to achieve full equality. *Affirmative Discrimination* was a critique of the *means* to the redemptive mandate, not the mandate itself.

The "Glazer trap," this confusion of intervention with mandate, comes from the calcification of liberal passion into mere propriety and iconography. And in the hardened and reflexive manners of contemporary liberalism, affirmative action is not simply one idea of reform among many; it is an icon of white American racial redemption. Moreover, as an icon, people are called upon to genuflect to it, not to examine it. We don't coldly analyze it as we do economic policy because its only real accountability is to white American redemption, not economic prosperity. And that redemption is won through conformity and genuflection, not the effectiveness of the policy. (President Clinton gets credit for supporting affirmative action, not for making it work.) So Glazer, who once viewed preferential affirmative action as only a social policy, today genuflects to it as an iconic representation of white redemption. And in this he looks around, as all conformists must, for justifications of a policy he saw through 20 years ago.

Conservative Confusion

But the "Glazer trap" goes well beyond liberals. Conservatives, too, have let the intervention of affirmative action be confused with the white mandate for redemption. In Congress the Dole-Canady Bill, which would eliminate group preferences in the federal government, was withdrawn by Republicans who had spoken out against group preferences for years. In the 1996 election, the Republicans stayed away from the California Civil Rights Initiative (which ended group preferences in the state government) until the very last minute, when it was clear that the initiative was doing far better than their own presidential candidate. Even these natural enemies of group preferences were afraid to take on the icon of affirmative action. And their fear was very precise: If they attacked the intervention, it would seem as though they were rejecting the larger mandate that called for white America to seek redemption through racial reform. Thus they had no way of attacking affirmative action without seeming racist.

The "Glazer trap" is in many ways the larger white American trap. White America has simply lacked the moral authority to confront the liberal fusion of intervention and mandate, of affirmative action and white redemption. Republicans have been no more able than Democrats to say openly that affirmative action is *only* an intervention, a method, and not representative of America's larger will to redeem itself racially.

The reason America needs racial redemption in the first place is also the reason for our brittle post-1960s liberalism and the "trap" it produces. America's racial history has injured the very legitimacy of institutional America where race is concerned. Unable even to change the *method* of reform without seeming to forsake the redemptive mandate means that the United States cannot carry out racial reform with integrity. Two things have not been possible: reform that works inside the framework of democratic principles, and reform that makes the difficult demands on former victims that are actually necessary for them to achieve parity. Post-1960s liberalism has been undermined, and to a large degree corrupted, by having to live within these impossible parameters. Unable to enforce either principles or difficulty, it has had to let the black grievance elite call the tune. And this elite has been quite happy not only to entrench preferential treatment for blacks as the predominant mode of reform but also to use preferences as a kind of patronage to insure its own power.

Conservatives fear that if they attack affirmative action, they will appear to be rejecting the larger mandate that called for white America to seek redemption through racial reform.

The lack of moral authority that racial reform hopes to overcome also makes integrity (and therefore effectiveness) impossible in such reform. This leads to the other side of the "trap," in which the liberal's good intentions undermine the good, in which he or she makes a virtue of discarding principles and suspending difficulty. On this side of the trap the liberal pursues racial redemption by embarking on a kind of corruption. Listen to the leaders of America's institutions speak on race—the president of U.C. Berkeley saying he wants to create "multicultural atmospheres"—and you hear beneath the good multicultural intention the corruption of human engineering, of a university picking and choosing among human beings by skin color alone. A racially sensitive atmosphere created by human insensitivity. Corruption in the service of "good." Without the moral authority to reform by principle, we end up with an insecure, defensive, and often corrupt liberalism, not of reform but of apology.

***Shelby Steele**, a Research Fellow at the Hoover Institution, is the author of* The Content of Our Character *(1990).* *This article is adapted from* A Dream Deferred: The Second Betrayal of Black Freedom in America, *published in October by HarperCollins.* *©1998 by Shelby Steele. Reprinted by arrangement with HarperCollins Publishers Inc.*

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The Bully and The Pulpit

A new model for church-state partnerships

By Joe Loconte

Every day by 5 A.M., 90 of the 380 inmates at the Jester II prison outside Houston are awake and primed—not for pumping iron, but for praying. The men, some of whom are violent felons, are enrolled in an intensive Christian rehabilitation program hosted by prison officials. "We talk Jesus every day, every minute," says program director Jack Cowley, "and we don't hide that fact at all." State guards provide security, but volunteers from Prison Fellowship otherwise run this wing of the facility, better known as the God Pod.

In South Carolina, Governor David Beasley used his leftover campaign funds to set up a religious nonprofit group with a singular mission: recruit churches and synagogues to "adopt" welfare families and lift them toward independence. The effort is vigorously backed by the state's Department of Social Services (DSS). "We've done focus groups with clients who've been successful in getting off welfare and we asked them the most important aspect of their success," says Leon Love, a DSS official. "They say it's attitude—and faith is the most important builder of attitude."

At Parkview Elementary School in Washington, D.C., the Reverend Jim Till heads a privately run, faith-based tutoring program. Thursday nights in the cafeteria, volunteers from local churches help about 60 at-risk kids improve their math and reading skills, concluding each session with a story drawn from the Bible. "We're part of the Parkview family," says Till, who calls to mind an affable uncle. "They know exactly what it is we're doing."

What these religious organizations are doing, in fact, is demolishing mistaken assumptions about the separation of church and state—while respecting their constitutional limits. After decades of isolation and suspicion, faith-based groups nationwide are teaming up with government to confront social ills ranging from welfare dependence to failing schools. Agreements are being struck that enlist the active support of government, yet zealously guard the independence of the faithful. "Some officials still look askance at anyone who quotes the Bible," says Marvin Olasky, a University of Texas professor whose books helped propel federal welfare reform. "But many are desperate enough to approve anything that works." Although operating below the radar of the social-service establishment, these partnerships could help redefine the nation's culture of caregiving.

God and Caesar

Until recently, there appeared to be only two roads for people of faith eager to help the needy: scorn government as a useless annoyance or become paid agents of the secular, administrative state. To be sure, anti-religious legal dogma has scared countless charitable groups away. Yet many cannot resist government largesse, and quickly join those social-service providers already awash in public funding. In Boston, Catholic Charities gets about 65 percent of its budget from state and federal sources. For Lutheran Social Services in New York, the figure is about 80 percent.

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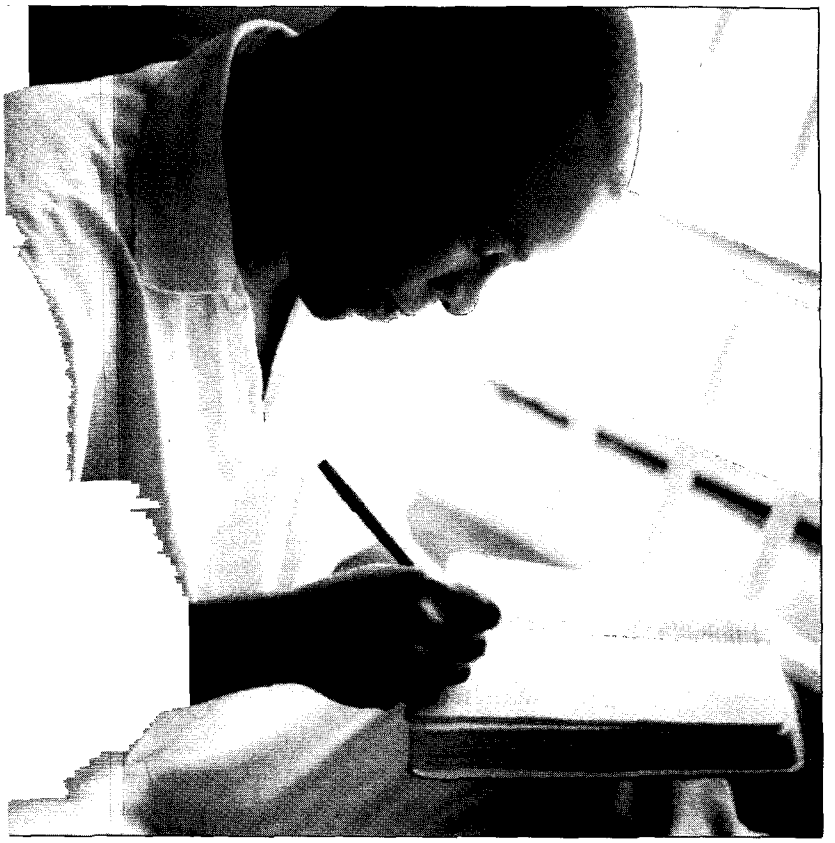

Under the guidance of Prison Fellowship, inmates in Houston's Jester prison learn to use the Bible as a compass for decisionmaking.

Photo by Michael Wilson / Prison Fellowship

Government funding, however, invites government regulation. The U.S. Supreme Court has ruled that the state can subsidize religious charities so long as they are not, in the words of the Court, "pervasively sectarian." This means groups must excise expressions of faith, such as prayer and proselytizing, from their taxpayer-funded programs. Many of them barely retain any distinctive religious identity.

Hence a new *via media* in church-state relations: charitable groups that shun Caesar's coin but not Caesar's cooperation. A growing company of religious providers are willing to accept the state's administrative and moral support but forgo its money and oversight. That allows them to tread on secular turf with a message that is, at its heart, religious.

At the same time, deals are being hammered out that satisfy secularists as well as sectarians. Programs contain blunt appeals to moral and spiritual renewal, yet participants are free to opt out. State officials can steer people toward church-based assistance, so long as they offer secular alternatives. Ministers may proselytize clients of government agencies, but not with public money and usually not on public property.

Remarkably, government officials are among those most determined to involve faith communities. Mississippi governor Kirk Fordice was one of the first to challenge churches to help welfare families, and his efforts are being duplicated in at least half a dozen other states. Texas governor George Bush is cutting state regulations that hinder religious groups involved in social services (see box, page 35). Indianapolis mayor Stephen Goldsmith has created a "Front Porch Alliance" in which government agencies brainstorm ways to engage congregations in community renewal.

"There are far greater threats to our inner-city children than religion," Goldsmith says. "In many of our most troubled neighborhoods, clearly the most important asset is the church."

Back to School

Nowhere is that maxim more visible than in the perennial powder keg of church-state conflicts, the public schools. John Dewey, the principal architect of public education in 20th-century America, argued that schools should erase the supposedly irrational religious influence of parents on their children. And thanks to a generation of muddled court rulings on religion, educators inhale Dewey's anti-religious bias like oxygen.

"They have received a long civics lesson from extreme separationists," says Steven McFarland of the Christian Legal Society. The result, he says, is that "school districts consider involving churches as a last resort."

But Dewey's moment may be passing. Mounting failures in student discipline and academic performance are leaving school administrators hungry for new approaches. In surprisingly large numbers, schools are inviting religious groups back into the classroom. Asked to serve as tutors and aides, church volunteers are bringing with them their faith and the value system it inspires.

That's exactly what many officials are hoping for, as long as religious folk tread gingerly in the secular schoolhouse. In both informal and written agreements, church volunteers are expected to be role models in class and on the playground. They can talk about values and offer advice. And they may invite children to religious activities, so long as parents are notified.

"Religious groups have a lot to offer, and no one is saying they shouldn't help out and run these programs," says Rob Boston of Americans United for Separation of Church and State. "There are ways that this can be done consistent with the First Amendment." More and more school districts around the nation are putting this thesis to the test.

In the Topeka Unified School District in Kansas, assistant superintendent Robert McFrazier held a meeting two years ago with 13 black pastors to see what they could do to reduce students' dropout and detention rates. He called on church leaders to enlist members as tutors and teachers' aides. He also asked congregations to make their facilities available for after-school help. The plan:

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Do everything possible to get more people of faith personally involved in the lives of low-income kids.

"I was fully aware of the ramifications of church-state entanglement," McFrazier says. "But we had a problem: How do we get our kids the help they need beyond the conventional school day?" So far eight congregations have responded, with no objections from local civil-liberties groups.

Pushing the Envelope

The Philadelphia school district recently hosted a luncheon for about a hundred religious leaders to help launch Project 10,000, a campaign to recruit classroom aides. "We are specifically asking churches to recruit people," says Joseph Meade, the project's director. "There is such a sense of crisis in the city that responsible leaders are looking for partnerships wherever they can be found."

Principals now meet regularly with church leaders to coordinate the effort. Volunteers are doing everything from helping with homework to monitoring cafeterias and playgrounds. School officials privately hope they will do even more.

"Schools have an obligation to address moral questions," says Philadelphia school superintendent David Hornbeck. "They can more powerfully do that if there's a link with churches and synagogues." Meade agrees: "Frankly, what we're really trying to do, in addition to boosting achievement, is to get mature adults mentoring our young people, presenting positive role models."

"Religious groups have a lot to offer," says a civil libertarian. "There are ways that this can be done consistent with the First Amendment."

Hornbeck preaches church-state cooperation—literally. An ordained Presbyterian minister, he delivers sermons once a month at churches around the city, blending biblical references with an appeal to get involved in public education. "I'm a lawyer and I have two divinity degrees, so I take the First Amendment very seriously," he explains. "In no way should it prohibit or inhibit partnerships between faith communities and schools."

Officials of the Chicago school district, one of the nation's largest and most troubled, are coming to the same conclusion. Following school-related violence last year, the district held talks with religious leaders and sought legal advice on brokering a formal partnership between school and church. They hope to start mentoring programs, create "safe places" for troubled youth, and lease church space for classrooms. In an early draft of district guidelines, officials acknowledge the risks of partnership, but insist that "these difficulties are not insurmountable."

Not long ago, that conclusion would have been unthinkable. Schools today are not only welcoming religious groups into class to assist teachers, but some have found permanent office space at school for them to operate. Others advertise church events to help volunteers connect with kids outside the classroom.

At Parkview Elementary in D.C., Jim Till works out of a basement office, where he is often seen coaching one or two delinquent kids as his "helpers" for the day. Church-based volunteers from STEP (Strategies to Elevate People) tutor weekly at Parkview. Most form friendships with children after hours through Bible clubs, church socials, and other events. "The system is broken and people are waiting for someone to come fix it," Till says. "Instead of taking our children out, it's time to get more involved in public education." Assistant principal Wendy Edwards agrees: "We have 531 kids at Parkview, mostly from public-assistance families. If we had 531 mentors, that would be fantastic."

Martin Luther King Elementary School in Wilmington, Delaware, serves a student population that is mostly fatherless and living in public housing. The school recently invited Younglife, a national, Christian-based mentoring effort, to run an on-site program for latchkey kids. Adults meet weekly with children to motivate them before class. Five days a week they hold after-school enrichment programs, including sports, music, recreation, and the arts.

Though Younglife volunteers "can't come in and preach about salvation," says principal Angela Guy, "we expect them to be positive role models." With a weightiness falling somewhere between Barney and the Bible, afternoon storytelling might impart lessons about courage, respect, or honesty. "We're still finding out what our boundaries are," says Younglife director Charles Harris. "But we're trying to get kids away from so much that is negative around them."

Younglife is targeting about 60 children this fall, but officials hope to find mentors for the majority of the school's 350 students. Says Guy, "We've told them our door is open."

The Friendship Factor

One of the most aggressive efforts to mobilize churches in the public schools is Michigan-based Kids Hope USA. About 720 adult tutors from 37 congregations now meet at least an hour a week with kids from 35 elementary schools, with more schools on a waiting list.

Founder Virgil Gulker, a maverick in church-based social outreach, disdains fuzzy thinking on both sides of the church-state divide. "My grievance with so many government initiatives is they seem to assume that the only thing children need is a com-

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puter," he says. "Our kids are like emotional checkbooks who are completely overdrawn."

Declining student performance, of course, often results from family breakdown, an issue best addressed by faith communities. Most congregations, however, have kept clear of public schools because they assumed that involvement was illegal or impossible, Gulker says. Whatever assistance they do offer—painting classrooms, purchasing supplies—overlooks more fundamental problems. "Most churches offer programs rather than relationships," he says. "The church needs to do what it does best, which is to love." School officials seem to agree: They say the friendships formed between tutors, children, and their families are the key to better performance, especially among at-risk kids.

Jim Till (pictured) runs a volunteer, faith-based tutoring program at D.C.'s Parkview Elementary with the blessing of school officials.

The focus on relationship-building is driving one of the most carefully scripted arrangements between religious groups and public education in the nation. Each Kids Hope congregation must hire a part-time person to coordinate and train volunteers, sign an agreement with participating schools, and direct its pastor to help tutor. Church volunteers not only get training in mentoring skills; they are also drilled in the ground rules for sharing their faith.

First, parental authority is supreme. Volunteers must get a parent's permission to initiate any contact with children. Moreover, parents are always told the content of church-sponsored events. "There are no surprises here," says Gulker. "At no time under any circumstances is that ever violated." Second, no proselytizing is allowed at school. Volunteers may invite children to church activities in which evangelism occurs, but must always alert parents first.

"I want to protect the churches' opportunity to evangelize off campus," Gulker explains, "but part of protecting that right means protecting the policy of no evangelism at schools." That seems consistent with concerns of civil libertarians. "We have to be sensitive to the rights of parents," says Rob Boston of Americans United. "Parents want to be the ones to determine what religious views their children are exposed to."

Legal experts know of no serious court challenges to church-based tutors. Yet some add a caveat: Public schools must not give preferential access to religious groups. A Decatur, Indiana, school tried that last year with a clergy-run counseling program and was stopped by the ACLU. A similar counseling effort is being challenged in a Beaumont, Texas, school. "If there's a mentoring program and a mentor belongs to a church, he's not precluded from participating. That's easy," says Marc Stern, a lawyer with the American Jewish Congress in New York. "But clearly preferential access is unconstitutional."

Dave Irwin, the principal of Alger Park Elementary in Grand Rapids, Michigan, says he's not limiting the access of other groups; it's just that the church two blocks away is the only one sending him mentors. "Here's an organized group of people who are trained to assist us, who bring a willingness to serve," he says. "We don't get that support from the community at large. We don't have people breaking down our door to help us."

Defusing the Crime Bomb

Princeton University criminologist John DiIulio proposes a thought experiment when he lectures on inner-city crime. Imagine, he says, you're driving alone at night through a blighted urban neighborhood. Your car is about to break down, but your guardian angel will allow you to choose one of three places for your car to die. Choice number one: in front of a movie theater where a teen slasher film is about to let out. Choice number two: outside a go-go bar serving malt liquor to underage drinkers. Choice number three: in front of a church resounding with the voices of the

Photo by Bill Crandall

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youth choir. "Naturally, you're praying for number three," he says. "You simply suppose that people involved with religious institutions are less likely to do you harm."

According to DiIulio, the best social-science research confirms what common sense suggests: Active religious congregations are a critical factor in reducing violence and stabilizing inner-city neighborhoods. A 1991 study published by the National Bureau of Economic Research, for example, found that urban youth whose *neighbors* attend church are more likely to have a job and less likely to use drugs or commit crime.

This fact is slowly insinuating itself into local crime-fighting strategies. Police are turning to clergy as the eyes and ears of their neighborhoods. Judges and prosecutors are diverting criminals from jail into church-based programs. Ministers and volunteers are invading prisons and bringing a tough-love gospel with them. In all this activity, church and state share at least one goal: lower crime rates through moral rehabilitation. Their challenge is to balance the coercive power of government with respect for offenders' religious beliefs—or lack of them.

Many of these efforts target juvenile offenders. The Reverend Tony Evans of Oak Cliff Bible Fellowship in Dallas, one of the largest churches in the city, tells the story of a teenager known to the church who was arrested and faced jail time. Oak Cliff ministers intervened on his behalf, persuading a judge to release the boy to them. He gave them six months to turn the young man around.

The ministers got busy. They talked with his parents and his probation officer. They paired him with a mentor and enrolled him in Bible studies and other church activities. Six months later, after the boy had landed a job and returned to school, Evans went back to court. The judge asked him, "Will you take 20 more?"

Oak Cliff now works with about 80 juveniles, all court-involved, in its "Teen Turnaround" effort. "We teach, preach, and practice transformation," says the Reverend LaFayette Holland, an outreach pastor. "That's what everyone is really looking for."

In Indiana, the Marion County juvenile court sends troubled kids to the Indianapolis Training Center (ITC), a Christian-based alternative to state detention centers. The one-year residential program matches 12- to 18-year-olds with a mentor family and volunteers from local high schools. Although not a lock-down facility, the ITC leaves lit-

The Front Porch Alliance

The Front Porch Alliance in Indianapolis is designed to encourage the life-transforming work of religious congregations and other value-shaping organizations that are uniquely capable of helping families, providing positive role models for children, and strengthening communities. We have established a nine-member community outreach team to meet with pastors, rabbis, and other community leaders. The goal: Go church by church and block by block to marshal resources and facilitate partnerships among a wide range of grass-roots organizations. Here are some of the lessons we've learned while building our "front porch":

Message. Do not tell the faith-based groups what to do (a common government mistake). Churches and other grass-roots organizations are already doing remarkable work. They are the true "experts." Civic initiatives such as ours should aim to support their efforts, not supplant them.

Church-state relations. Government ought to be neutral toward religion, but government too often is hostile toward faith-based organizations. In Indianapolis, for example, a state inspector complained that we spent government job-training funds through religious organizations. The Front Porch Alliance does not fund the worship and evangelism activities of religious congregations. At the same time, we do not discriminate against citizens who accomplish remarkable results in their communities and who also openly and actively profess faith in God.

Patience. This work is very time-intensive. Many urban congregations, for example, do not have a full-time pastor. Volunteers have other, full-time jobs. Most organizations must delay making any commitments until they discuss the potential project at their next board meeting. Be aware of these organizational constraints. Stay in touch while patiently waiting for a response.

Trust. Many grass-roots organizations—and especially churches—can have a healthy distrust of government. The only way to overcome this distrust is to support words with actions. After three or four months of tangible results from the Front Porch Alliance—partnerships, grants, donated furniture and computers, even free streetlights—trust developed. Most groups now encourage local government's attendance at their events.

Collaboration. Once trust has been established, churches and grass-roots organizations within geographic areas should be encouraged to collaborate with each other. As one Indianapolis pastor likes to say, "Working together works." Collaboration of neighborhood assets creates greater momentum for significant accomplishments. Collaboration is more important than money and at the same time is essential to attract money. Collaboration attracts grant dollars because most funders emphasize successful partnerships.

Scale. Government often makes the mistake of trying to "scale up" small, successful initiatives. But these grass-roots initiatives work because they are small. They have no bureaucracy and little overhead. Most importantly, they wield unique assets for the specific challenges of the local neighborhood. Instead of taking small efforts to scale, government should take what it has learned from previous projects and apply those lessons to the distinct initiatives of grass-roots organizations in other neighborhoods.

—Mayor Stephen Goldsmith

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tle time for mischief. Residents are up at 5:30 A.M., usually reading from Proverbs, the Old Testament book stuffed with sound-bite advice on honesty, hard work, and holiness. Mornings are spent doing chores, afternoons studying, and evenings playing sports.

County officials overcame early objections by making sure parents and children understand the regimen. "We will not order anybody into it, but once they choose it, they are ordered to follow through," says Brian Toepp, the county's assistant chief of probation. Moreover, by accepting only private money, ITC is free to immerse its residents in Christian teaching. "We're trying to teach them character," says director Benny McWha, "and we believe character is based on biblical principles."

Last fall, juvenile court judge Jim Payne met with leading ministers and asked them to get more involved with troubled youth and their families. Westside Community Ministries, a coalition of about 35 churches and religious groups, has emerged to offer community-service work, faith-based counseling, and other services. "Everything we do with them is an excuse to build a relationship," says the Reverend Jay Height, the executive director of Shepherd Community Church.

Payne brushes aside the argument that government should not endorse faith-based efforts to reduce crime. "This is not an issue of [government] proselytizing," Payne says. "As long as people understand the difference, they've made the choice, I haven't." Though courts can order families to seek counseling, for example, they may choose between Westside or secular programs.

There are many reasons for the state's willingness to try religious approaches. In Marion County one of them is sheer numbers: Each year the court system sees 10,000 youths and families, far too many for state-paid counselors or probation officers to track. "We have this untapped resource in almost every corner of every neighborhood," Payne says. "But we have virtually excluded churches from the service-delivery system."

No one in Indianapolis makes that point more convincingly than Mayor Stephen Goldsmith. With a lawyer's steely logic, the former prosecutor explains why secular government cannot afford to ignore, much less harass, religious communities. "Only hardened skeptics have trouble accepting that widespread belief in a Supreme Being improves the strength and health of our communities," he says. "Government can accomplish more by working with faith-based groups than it can ever achieve by circumventing them."

Goldsmith's Front Porch Alliance, what he calls a "civic switchboard," probably reigns as the national leader in this regard (see box, page 32). In just a few years, the Alliance has developed nearly 600 partnerships while working with more than 150 churches and other value-shaping groups. It also sets up workshops for civic leaders, giving them technical assistance for navigating local bureaucracies or tapping into community resources.

The Boston Crusade

A recent *Newsweek* cover story celebrated perhaps the most successful example of faith-based crime-fighting anywhere: Boston's Ten Point Coalition. Led by the iconoclastic Reverend Eugene Rivers, a cadre of urban churches began working with police, judges, and prosecutors in 1993 to tackle the problem of youth violence. After Boston went two years without a single gun-related homicide among teens, even national magazines such as the *New Yorker* started to take notice. "You couldn't function effectively without the ministers in Boston," former Boston police commissioner William Bratton told the magazine. "Those churches and leaders like Gene Rivers were a very significant reason for our success."

Fifty-four churches in Boston now devote staff and volunteer manpower to the effort, sometimes walking neighborhoods at night or doing street outreach to gang members. Pastors double as legal advocates, helping youth negotiate the court system. Teens on probation attend church-based summer camps.

The coalition also runs a groundbreaking fatherhood program, and at least 11 court jurisdictions in Massachusetts send offenders into its 12-week classes. These are men who need more than a pep talk in good fathering: The most recent group of 80 program graduates had been convicted of 544 separate offenses. Most had been charged with a violent crime. Fifty-three percent had committed domestic violence. And most did not live with their children.

Police have no hard numbers on recidivism rates, but say that 65 percent of the men finish the program, which means they comply with probation rules, abstain from drugs, and make restitution to their victims. About 300 have graduated since 1993, and most have claimed paternity or are taking steps to do so, says Milton Britton, the state's chief probation officer.

Volunteers are invading prisons and bringing with them a tough-love gospel. Church and state share one goal: lower crime rates through moral rehabilitation.

Each two-hour class is a model for negotiating First Amendment pitfalls. Instruction is deliberately held in local churches. "I've been in law enforcement for 30 years," Britton says. "If you take out the church, the moral and spiritual thing, it ain't gonna work." Offenders are not ordered into

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the program, but to encourage them to sign up, judges often waive probation fees. "We won't take someone into the fatherhood program and ask them to worship in that church," says Bernard Fitzgerald, the chief probation officer of Dorchester District Court. "But we are going to try to instill in them a sense of what fatherhood is."

Instructors go about this the old-fashioned way, with a mix of summons and shame. "It's better than a therapy session," says Judge Kathleen Coffey. "It offers men a moral compass, and it teaches them about personal responsibility. I send people there all the time." Pastors and probation officers take turns pounding home five principles of fatherhood: Give guidance to children, show them affection, show respect to the children's mother, provide financial support, and set an example by living within the law.

Clergymen are free to incorporate Scripture. "I'm not dogmatic in presenting the gospel," says the Reverend Roland Hayes Robinson of Bethel AME Church. "But Christian principle is implicit in the way I promote respect for women, highlight the benefits of fatherhood, and reflect on our individual purpose for being alive."

The God Pod

Prison Fellowship's invasion of a Texas prison surely ranks as one of the nation's most audacious experiments in criminal rehabilitation. The program, called Innerchange, is run inside the belly of a state correctional facility. Program staff have 24-hour access to inmates in one wing of the prison, and oversee virtually all day-to-day activities there. Participants need not claim a Christian faith, but must agree to a "Bible-based, Christ-centered" program. Although inmates are allowed to pursue their own religious beliefs (some attend weekly Islamic services), the explicit goal is Christian conversion.

Chaplains have always worked in prisons, of course, but never as comprehensively as Innerchange staff. Says senior warden Fred Becker, "It's the difference between being in church on Sunday and practically being in seminary."

Prison Fellowship may have designed a lawsuit-proof approach to getting God into the nation's prison system: The program is funded purely from private sources, is completely voluntary, has no effect on participants' length of parole, and does not discriminate on the basis of religion. "Anytime you start spending public money on religious activity, it becomes suspect," says Jay Jacobson, the executive director of the ACLU in Texas. "But we don't have an objection to religious activity in prisons that is voluntary and not paid for out of public coffers." Carol Vance, the former chairman of the Texas Board of Criminal Justice and an early supporter, predicts, "We will not have any serious constitutional challenge."

"I've been in law enforcement for 30 years," says one probation official. "If you take out the church, the moral and spiritual thing, it ain't gonna work."

Innerchange staffers, however, don't take government benevolence on faith. "It concerns me every day," says Jack Cowley, the program director and a former warden himself. "We have to advocate for our program and remind them that we're here to do God's work. We've got to do it our way."

The program won a major concession on the issue of inmate visitation. A federal court order stipulates that inmates are entitled to only one visit per weekend, by a maximum of two adults. That posed a problem, since Innerchange depends on volunteer mentors to develop strong ties to prisoners. But Jester II officials persuaded the Texas Department of Criminal Justice to designate the volunteers as adjunct staff members, not visitors, and therefore not subject to the federal rule.

About 200 church volunteers now work with 130 inmates and parolees in the 18-month regimen. Early results are impressive: Of the 26 ex-offenders who have completed the program, all have jobs and are involved in local churches. There are already plans to duplicate the effort in Kansas and Iowa this year. "We want to be in every state and federal prison in the country," says Prison Fellowship president Thomas Pratt, "building the church inside prison walls."

A Welfare Revolution

Informal agreements between churches and city hall traditionally characterized efforts to help America's poor, until they were eclipsed by the modern welfare state. "Many lives can be saved if we recapture the vision that changed lives up to a century ago, when our concept of compassion was not so corrupt," writes Olasky in *The Tragedy of American Compassion* (1992). The Welfare Reform Act of 1996, which ended the guarantee of federal aid to the poor, may be a step back to the future.

Leon Love, the deputy director of South Carolina's DSS, is unusually frank about his agency's failed welfare policies. "We used to build barriers to prevent churches from participating. We hid behind confidentiality," he says. "But people on the road to self-sufficiency must believe they can get there, and to put a person in the company of believers is powerful."

In no other area of social policy has the shift in conventional wisdom been more dramatic. Welfare offices are being renamed "family independence agencies." Eligibility experts are scrambling to help recipients find jobs. And congrega-

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Faith in the Future of Texas

Many private social-service groups in Texas have complained of bureaucratic rules and regulations that threaten their religious integrity. In spring 1996, I appointed a 16-member task force to recommend ways to remove the barriers that stifle these quiet heroes. The task force unveiled a landmark report, *Faith in Action*, that recommended about 40 ways to unleash the best of Texas. Their work led to legislation that will make it easier for good-hearted Texans to serve their neighbors in a variety of areas:

Treating addiction. We must enlist the aid of every effective ally to conquer the scourge of drugs. Strong Bible-based programs like Teen Challenge (whose cure rates far surpass those of other programs) were crowded out by state regulations that embraced a strict medical model of addiction treatment. The message was, "You may do it better than everybody else, but you don't do it our way." Under our new law, programs offering exclusively religious methods of treatment—prayer, Bible study, spiritual nurture, moral guidance—can operate free from the credentialing regulations that cover secular programs.

Alternative accreditation. Caregivers in Texas don't resist accountability, but they do resist "subordinating" part of their ministry—a day-care center, a residential program for wayward kids, a foster home—to state control. The state, however, has a legitimate interest in protecting health and safety. A win-win solution is "alternative accreditation." Texas now permits child-care providers and "child-placing" agencies to exist without state licensure and regulation if they are accredited by recognized private-sector bodies whose standards meet or exceed state minimums.

Gov. Bush: "Government does not have a monopoly on compassion."

Protecting the good Samaritans. Medical training coupled with religious commitment is a powerful prescription for improving health. Churches and nonprofits are uniquely positioned to reach vulnerable populations, but many medical professionals, especially retired ones who lack malpractice insurance, fear litigation if they donate medical services. I proposed legal protections for these good Samaritans who volunteer their services to low-income Texans. I also signed a law giving litigation immunity to people who donate medical supplies to nonprofit health-care organizations.

My view is simple: Government does not have a monopoly on compassion. After spending trillions of dollars on a generation of failed government programs, it's time we shifted our focus from compassionate intentions to compassionate results.

—Governor George W. Bush

tions are being invited—sometimes begged—to lend a hand.

Governments are turning to religious groups for help in part because they must meet state-imposed deadlines for terminating assistance. But surely the deeper reason is the disastrous failure of welfare to lead families out of poverty. This is especially true for the "hard cases": young mothers with no self-respect, no high-school diploma, and no work history. These are the families whose problems cannot be solved by a booming economy.

Nor, it should be added, by government caseworkers, who spend perhaps an hour a month with welfare recipients. Unraveling the practical and moral problems of these families simply cannot be done on the cheap. "We can do some of that, but we're limited, because we're primarily eligibility specialists," says Elizabeth Seale of the Texas Department of Human Services.

Enter the faith community. "It appears that only churches are willing to make the long-term volunteer investment required," writes Amy Sherman, author of *Restorers of Hope: Reaching the Poor in Your Community with Church-Based Ministries That Work* (1997) and a leading welfare-reform specialist. Thousands of congregations around the country are working closely with welfare families, helping them find jobs, lending emotional support, assisting with child care, and helping with budgeting and even grocery shopping.

It can be labor-intensive work: Churches in Anne Arundel County, Maryland, for example, report that over a six-month period they log an average of 400 hours per family. And not all of that time is spent holding hands: Career counseling usually comes with biblical teachings about work and family responsibilities, placing new moral demands on the poor.

In Texas, Lutheran Social Services (LSS) has signed a "memorandum of understanding" with the state's Department of Human Services to help already-employed families stay off the dole. With the state's blessing, the LSS is training its volunteers in a program of "comprehensive spiritual care." Volunteers make a one-year commitment as mentors, helping with transportation, budgeting, and other issues. "The state is realizing there's a piece they are missing that they can't fill," says LSS president Kurt Senske. "It's a good marriage."

In California, a welfare-reform law went into effect on January 1, 1998, requiring thousands of recipients to exit welfare by December 2002. A month later, Fresno mayor Jim Patterson—himself an active member of Evangelicals for Social Action—called together religious and civic leaders. The goal: jump-start a partnership between churches (mostly evangelical) and the Merced County welfare office. The reason: The county supports 8,000 people on public assistance and,

Photo by World Wide Photo / Paul Bernard-Houston

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with 15 percent unemployment, can't possibly find all of them jobs. So for starters, county officials want businessmen in congregations to hire and train welfare moms.

Churches are also being asked to make their facilities available for child care. Sunday-school classes for children are OK, as long as families can opt out. Either way, church members are expected to get personally involved in the lives of welfare recipients. Says Paul Lundberg, who is coordinating the effort, "A state official told me that if there were a law against what we're doing, he would ignore the law, because they need us so badly."

Building Safeguards

States are designing partnerships with congregations that are keeping litigators at bay. For example, no information on welfare recipients is released to churches without their consent. Families must agree to any relationship with a congregation and are never obligated to attend services or church events. State money almost never flows directly to churches, and public assistance usually continues until recipients are independent. "So long as individuals may freely choose religion, merely enabling private decisions logically cannot be a government establishment of religion," writes Carl Esbeck, a law professor at the University of Missouri and a leading authority on the legality of government collaboration with religious groups.

An early model was the Mississippi initiative, in which the governor used his bully pulpit to get churches involved with the poor. "God, not government, will be the savior of welfare families," Fordice told an assembly of religious leaders at the state capitol in 1995, launching his Faith and Families project.

The state's Department of Human Services (DHS) works directly with local congregations, matching them with willing families. Church volunteers serve as spiritual social workers, focusing not on securing more government benefits, but on helping families acquire the habits that lead to long-term independence.

Church response to the governor's appeal so far has been modest. "We thought we could be the catalyst between state government, the clients, and the faith community," says Donald Taylor, the executive director of Mississippi's DHS. "But the reception we got in some quarters, quite frankly, was disappointing."

There are at least two snags to this top-down approach. First, state employees typically don't warm to volunteers who lack degrees in social work and threaten their jobs. "I have many individuals in my agency who think churches shouldn't be involved," says a veteran in government welfare services. "They're a threat. It becomes a union issue."

Second, the Mississippi model fails to allay long-held suspicions that any government entanglement amounts to a pact with the devil. Conservative churches in Maryland, for example, did not even show up when the state held a hearing on revolutionizing welfare.

A more nuanced policy is being hammered out in other states. In South Carolina, Governor Beasley's nonprofit group is the engine for change. The Putting Families First Foundation is building a statewide database of organizations willing to offer help, while working with the DSS to match those groups with families. It also teaches church workers about protecting confidentiality and integrating faith in their caregiving, among other issues.

Putting Families First is incorporated as a religious nonprofit, and its director, Lisa Van Riper, is a committed Christian—facts not lost on conservative congregations. "Lisa can go out and preach self-sufficiency and the ministry role of the church in a much more forthright way than can a bureaucrat," says Leon Love. "It has much more of an impact on the recruitment process." Van Riper has brought her seminar to about 500 churches and synagogues. Figures for church involvement are not available, but about 160 welfare moms are in the program.

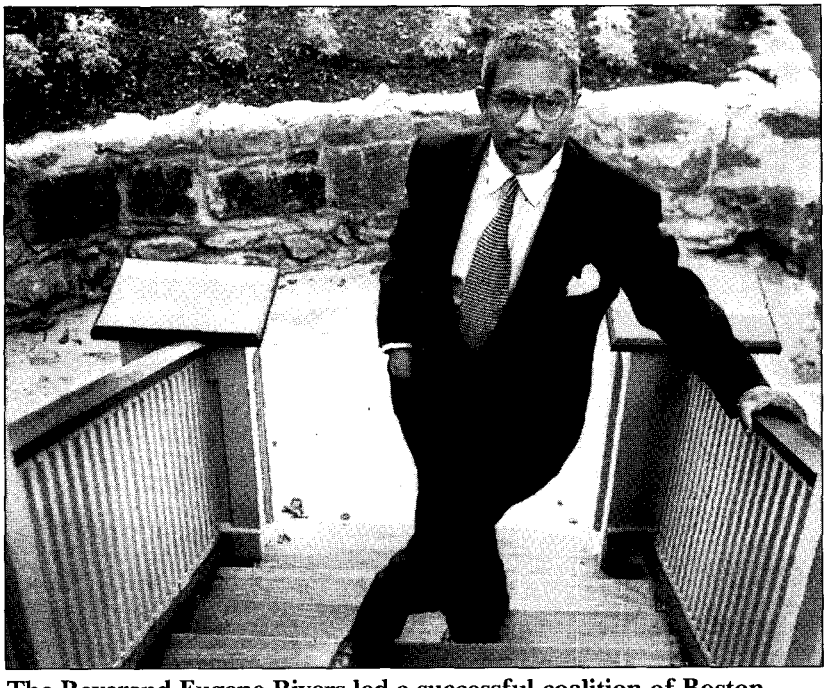

Photo by Bill Brett / *Boston Globe*

The Reverend Eugene Rivers led a successful coalition of Boston churches, police, judges, and prosecutors to curb teenage violence.

A similar effort is underway in Michigan, where Governor John Engler's welfare reforms have slashed caseloads. Ottawa County became the first locality in the nation to move every able-bodied

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welfare recipient into a job. It was one of six sites in the governor's Project Zero, chosen specifically because of its extensive church network.

State officials give much of the credit to the Good Samaritan Center, a church-based nonprofit that recruits and trains church volunteers to support families moving from welfare to work. Within six months of being approached by Engler, Good Samaritan had enlisted nearly 60 churches, or about 25 percent of the county's total. "Determining eligibility—that we do well. We're not very good at wrapping our arms around a family," says Loren Snippe, who oversaw the Ottawa effort. "Church volunteers bring the ability to have a long-term relationship. You can't pay people to do this."

By serving as honest brokers between church and state, the nonprofits in Michigan and South Carolina can help maintain a stable partnership even as state and local governments change hands. "The churches need someone they can trust, who knows their internal culture," says Bill Raymond, a former director of Good Samaritan. "But you also need an independent actor who knows how to engage the powers that be."

Another advantage of the nonprofit model is that it guards the independence of churches as they reach out to the welfare families. The nonprofit's job is to ensure a good match between welfare recipients and congregations; government's role is confined mostly to writing checks and sharing client information. "It's not a government program," Van Riper says. "If the church and a client want to talk about faith, they can do it because it is a private relationship."

Reclaiming Compassion

All of this activity, though significant, is occurring in a legal and political culture that, in the words of Yale law professor Stephen Carter, "trivializes religious devotion." Many liberals still treat serious religious belief more as a threat than a cure to the nation's social ills. Writing last year in the *American Prospect*, Wendy Kaminer called these partnerships an "unholy alliance," suggesting they are part of a larger campaign "to align public policies with majoritarian religious practices and ideals."

Too many government officials see the same dark conspiracies. A few years ago, Indianapolis mayor Goldsmith asked churches to participate in a summer job-training program. At the end of the summer, the state of Indiana cited the city as "out of compliance" with a state law barring the use of funds for religious purposes. The reason: Participants voluntarily prayed before meals and field trips.

Many in government, however, are unpersuaded by the yowling of liberal legalists. "We have a common goal," says Milton Britton, the chief probation officer of Massachusetts. "We're trying to improve the quality of life for our communities. When you bring the moral perspective, the anchor that prevents you from falling off the edge, it makes a difference."

Until the onset of the modern welfare state, the decisive power of faith to curb evil and inspire charity was taken for granted. Even French philosopher Voltaire, a relentless critic of Christianity, argued that societies would collapse into disorder without some type of rational religion. "I want my attorney, my tailor, my servants, even my wife to believe in God," he said, "and I think that then I shall be robbed and cuckolded less often."

Ironically, it is the welfare bureaucracy's moral collapse that has lawmakers and others taking another look at the faith community. The "charitable choice" provision of the federal welfare law, after all, was designed to boost involvement of religious charities in fighting poverty. The law prohibits government from undermining the religious commitments of groups taking federal funds. It has not been tested in the courts, however, and many providers still seem wary of state entanglement.

Meanwhile, many believers stand ready to help where government has failed, if only government were willing to make room for them. "We have people who feel it's their obligation before God to care for the poor," says Van Riper of Putting Families First. "They're organized, they're in the working community, and they have all the resources necessary. The little boy who brought the basket of fish to the disciples was not a Ph.D. nutritionist."

Religious believers and broad-minded lawmakers are ratifying an old precept of American civic life: that collaboration between church and state need not lead to corruption. They are steering their way around those who fret over a lunchtime prayer, as well as those who would trade their souls for a government contract. And they follow Goldsmith's golden rule of government: "We will never ask an organization to change any of its core values in order to participate in a relationship with us."

Until the onset of the modern welfare state, the decisive power of faith to curb evil and inspire charity was taken for granted.

With that rule to guide them—and with a little faith, hope, and charity—they might just reclaim and sanctify the compassionate impulses of a new generation of caregivers.

Joe Loconte *is the William E. Simon Fellow for Religion and a Free Society at The Heritage Foundation and the author of* Seducing the Samaritan: How Government Contracts Are Reshaping Social Services *(Pioneer Institute for Public Policy Research).*

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The Melodies of Mayhem

To curb obscene lyrics, change minds, not laws

By Senator Sam Brownback

If music is the universal language, it is small wonder that public discourse has grown increasingly shrill. Although controversial music has always been with us, the past several years have seen a marked increase in violent, hateful, racist, and misogynist songs, not merely on the market but topping the charts. Never have the sounds of slaughter been so profitable—nor the need for a thoughtful response to music violence been so pressing.

Recent bestselling albums have included graphic descriptions of murder, sexual torture, and rape. Songs such as "Don't Trust a B—" by the group Poetic Hustla'z or "Slap a 'Ho" by Dove Shack condone hostility or even violence toward women. "Shock-rock" groups like Cannibal Corpse and Marilyn Manson go even further, with songs such as "F—d with a Knife" and "Cake and Sodomy." Consider just a few examples from top-selling albums:

F— home we capture with more hits and slaughter more kids . . .
You know for real the nig— came f—in' sucked my d— . . .
I have nig—z falling like white b— in a scary movie . . .
—From "Get At Me Dog" by DMX, on the album *It's Dark and Hell Is Hot*

I'm known in the ghetto for slangin' narcotics . . .
I come up short I'ma bust yo' f—in' lip up
Cuz money and murder is the code that I live by
Come to ya set and do a muthaf—in' walk-by.
—From "Come and Get Some" by Master P, on the album *Ghetto D*

Store photo by Bill Crandall; Manson photo by Joseph Cultice

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These are not extreme examples, only recent ones. The popularity and profitability of hyper-violent music has fueled its growth and secured the corporate backing of the most successful, prestigious entertainment conglomerates in the world. With such backing, both of the albums mentioned above reached number one on the *Billboard* 200, the music industry's official listing of the most popular albums in the land. At this writing, DMX's album *It's Dark and Hell Is Hot* still ranks among the top 25 albums, while Master P's new release, after hitting number one, has remained in the top 50 for four months.

The chart-topping popularity and record-breaking profitability of such albums raises the obvious question: Who is buying this music? Although most music with hyper-violent lyrics carries a "parental advisory" warning sticker, such music appears to be most popular among exactly the group that is supposed to be warned against buying it: children. I haven't heard of many Marilyn Manson fans over the age of 20.

The Knowledge Gap

Few adults have any idea how violent and venomous some of these lyrics are. This gap in parents' knowledge about violent, misogynistic music is illustrated perfectly by the experience of Debbie Pelley, who testified at a U.S. Senate hearing on this issue that I chaired last summer. Mrs. Pelley is a junior-high-school teacher in Jonesboro, Arkansas. One of her students was Mitch Johnson, the young boy who, along with a friend, was recently charged with shooting and killing four students and a teacher. In the aftermath of this tragedy, several of Mrs. Pelley's students approached her to talk about Mitch's fascination with violent rock and rap. She surveyed her students and found that, although virtually all of them were familiar with the violence-laced lyrics of songs by Bone Thugs-N-Harmony, Tupac Shakur, and other groups, most were convinced that their parents were not. My experience is similar: Most of the Kansas students whom I encounter are familiar with (even if they are not fans of) "gangsta rap" and shock-rock groups; few think their parents know anything about it.

Industry executives claim that children under 18 are unable to buy such music. In a recent Senate hearing, I asked Hilary Rosen, the CEO of the Recording Industry Association of America, whether the music industry had ever studied the demographic profile of those who purchase shock rock or gangsta rap. She repeatedly asserted that the industry had no such information and said that "record retailers restrict the purchase of stickered albums to people above the age of 17." Would that it were so. Children between the ages of 12 and 17 constitute a large portion of the music market; the profitability of most hyper-violent albums depends in large part on capturing a share of the youth market. Although most albums with hyper-violent lyrics carry parental advisory stickers, there is little evidence to support the industry's claim that such labels either adequately inform parents or effectively deter children from purchasing such albums.

Some retailers, such as Wal-Mart, do have clear standards for selecting the albums they stock, and other retail outlets will not sell music that carries an advisory label to those under 18. But there are many other stores that do not restrict the purchase of such music, and many of the stores with restric-

Warning labels notwithstanding, children browsing in their local record stores are free to buy the likes of shock-rock group Marilyn Manson (far left) and other offensive acts.

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tions do not enforce them. Moreover, the advertisements for such music usually run in media outlets with a strong teen following: music magazines, teen magazines, MTV, internet music sites, and so on. In many ways, the mass marketing of the sounds of slaughter appears to be targeted at kids, not at adults.

Producing, promoting, and peddling violent music to children is not merely scandalous, it is dangerous. Marketing messages of hate and violence to children sends the signal that violence is widespread and normal, that it is acceptable to abuse women, and that there is glamour in lawlessness. Whatever we glamorize, we encourage; a society that glorifies violence—in music or elsewhere—will surely grow more violent.

For free societies to endure, they must distinguish between what is allowed and what is honored.

The need to respond is clear, but how we respond is critically important. We have long heard talk of new laws, lawsuits, boycotts, and divestitures. The great challenge for thoughtful conservatives and policymakers is to respond to the onslaught of violent music and to the demands of indignant constituents in a way that respects constitutional freedoms *and* protects children. I believe the only way to do both is to change minds and hearts rather than laws.

No Quick Fixes

In some circles, this view is hard to sell. Congress is frequently tempted to "fix" every social problem with a law—in this case, mandatory warning labels, federally enforced purchasing restrictions, and the like. Having passed such laws, Congress can then pronounce the problem solved, congratulate itself on a job well done, and put the issue aside. In so doing, Congress would be overlooking the more important task of facilitating cultural change.

But that is not the only danger of legislative quick fixes. Focusing on legislative solutions also opens the door to counterproductive federal meddling. The federal government should not usurp local, voluntary efforts by music retailers to restrict the sale of violent music to minors or by radio stations to articulate programming standards.

Even worse, federal legislation raises the specter of censorship. Government interference in commercial activity always gives rise to unintended (and often regrettable) consequences; interfering with free speech and expression is especially disastrous. I believe that the First Amendment provides wide latitude for various forms of speech—including offensive, obnoxious speech. But for free societies to endure, there must be a distinction between what is allowed and what is honored.

Let me explain. The fact that certain forms of speech enjoy constitutional protection does not mean that they deserve respectability. Freedom of expression does not mean immunity from criticism. There are many forms of speech that should be thoroughly criticized and roundly stigmatized, even as they are protected. Conservatives have spent far too much effort seeking to shove offensive, debasing forms of speech (such as violent and misogynistic music lyrics) outside the sphere of constitutional protection, and far too little effort seeking to stigmatize it. Attempts at the former have been failures; attempts at the latter have been feeble. And as a result, we are left with violent lyrics that are neither outlawed nor repudiated.

In many ways, our willingness to censure is as important to the preservation of freedom as our refusal to censor. Virtually all of the Founding Fathers agreed that nations rise and fall based on what they honor and what they discourage. Samuel Adams, one of the most outspoken free-speech advocates among the early patriots, said, "A general dissolution of principles and manners will more surely overthrow the liberties of America than the whole force of the common enemy." Cultural decline is not merely a threat to family life, it is a threat to freedom. Vigorous criticism of the perverse, hateful, and violent in speech and song reflects a willingness on the part of citizens to take ideas seriously, evaluate them accordingly, and engage them directly. A cultural predisposition to care about ideas and to discriminate among them, while protecting the freedom of others to disagree and debate, is the strongest bulwark of a free society. A citizenry that evaluates ideas, discerns the true and good from the false and base, values reason over reaction, affirms that which is uplifting, and refutes that which is wrong is exactly the society most likely to value and to keep free speech.

There is an old saying, "Tell me what you love, and I'll tell you who you are." This is as true of societies as of individuals. What we stigmatize says as much about our national character as what we allow. We grow to resemble what we honor; we become less like what we disparage. What we choose to legitimize, therefore, forecasts our future. The proper response to hateful, offensive music is thus criticism—not censorship and not silence. We should agitate rather than legislate.

The Bully Pulpit

What would such agitation look like? There are, I believe, several steps legislators and concerned activists can take:

Raise public awareness. Although children are regularly exposed to popular songs, parents are of-

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ten clueless about the content of the songs their children hear and buy. This is, in part, because media outlets such as newspapers refuse to print for adults the lyrics that are peddled to their kids. It is vitally important for parents, teachers, ministers, youth workers, coaches, and other adults to be aware of the messages being fed to their children.

Call for corporate responsibility. The vast majority of gangsta rap and shock-rock albums are produced by labels owned by one of seven corporate conglomerates: Seagrams, Sony, Polygram, Time-Warner, BMG, Viacom, and EMI. Ironically, most of these corporations claim to be a "company with a conscience" or a "good corporate citizen." The CEOs of these companies owe the public an explanation of how they reconcile the offensive music they peddle to children with their corporate conscience. They also owe the public truth in advertising: If they claim to be "responsible" corporations, they should let the public know what their standards are.

There is a precedent for this: The National Association of Broadcasters code of conduct, which lasted until the 1970s, is one example of a voluntary and effective agreement to articulate and abide by decency standards. It functioned as a social compact with consumers and offered the public a yardstick by which to measure corporate responsibility. The code was drafted without any government coercion; it simply articulated the standards to which broadcasters voluntarily bound themselves.

We need a new entertainment code of conduct. Such a code would alert the public to the standards by which entertainment executives select their programming or produce their albums, and therefore make entertainment executives more accountable to the public for their choices.

Companies should be prepared to stand behind their product. When William Bennett met with Time-Warner CEO Gerald Levin and asked him to read his company's handiwork aloud, Levin balked. If entertainment executives have qualms about reading such lyrics to adults, shouldn't they have qualms about selling them to children?

Encourage grass-roots activism. Public leaders can provide information and encouragement to activists who wish to effect change on the local level. I have found that one of the best ways to encourage greater parental involvement and grass-roots activism is simply showing people the lyrics to these songs and talking about them as I travel across my home state of Kansas. In the last year, several people in my state have formed local "cultural renewal societies." Each of these small societies comprises a few citizens who want to change the culture for the better and have voluntarily banded together to work on local options for doing so. The best solutions to the problems of cultural breakdown can be found in the neighborhoods of America, not in the halls of Congress. One of the most effective things lawmakers can do is to encourage constituents to take local action.

Exercise "the power to convene." National political leaders have a unique platform from which to call together the best thinkers and most accomplished researchers on any particular issue. Various studies conducted on the topic of music and media influence agree that children are powerfully affected by the messages of music, television, and movies. Giving a national forum for the dissemination of such information helps equip parents, teachers, grass-roots activists, and concerned citizens to take appropriate action.

I chaired two Senate hearings on the issue of music violence precisely for this reason. During these hearings, we did not call for legislation, regulation, litigation, or any other machination of government to prohibit or restrict even the most violent lyrics. Rather, the purpose of these hearings was to raise public awareness by soliciting the views of the nation's foremost academic and medical experts on the impact of violent music.

Use the bully pulpit. Public officials have, by virtue of their position and prominence, a platform from which to raise ideas and issues in public discourse, and to persuade, incite, and inspire. Consistent, persistent use of the bully pulpit is a powerful way to imprint the importance of music content upon the public consciousness and to inspire public action and private reflection. We are, I believe, beginning an important public dialogue: People are disgusted by the moral lapses of various public figures, increasingly convinced of the importance of character and integrity in the conduct of public affairs, and actively looking for ways to cultivate civility and decency in their neighborhoods and communities. We have at last reached a consensus that our social fabric is frayed and torn; the public has shifted its focus to what can be done to mend it.

The best remedies for cultural breakdown can be found in the neighborhoods of America, not the halls of Congress.

Public officials cannot rid the world of violent lyrics; it would be folly to try. For those of us seeking solutions to the loss of civility in society and the glorification of hate, violence, and misogyny in popular music, our goal must be not to coerce, but to persuade. Appealing to conscience and reason takes time and effort and offers few short-term political benefits. But it is the best way to keep citizens involved, society civil, and our speech free.

***Sam Brownback** is a Republican senator from Kansas.*

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Busing's Boston Massacre

A federal judge's experiment in social engineering has unraveled neighborhoods and frustrated black achievement

By Matthew Richer

It's the story South Boston schoolboys love to hear. On March 4, 1776, under cover of darkness, General George Washington ordered his men to position dozens of captured British cannon atop Dorchester Heights. The code word that night was "Boston" and the reply was "Saint Patrick," in honor of the many Irish volunteers who strained to haul those cannon up the steep slopes of the Heights overlooking Boston Harbor. For days, Washington's men bombarded the British fleet until the ships finally withdrew from Boston on March 17—St. Patrick's Day.

Some two hundred years later, on that very ground, a different kind of revolution was fought by the distant kinsmen of those cannon haulers. This is the story Bostonians do not like to hear, for it was a battle they could not win. On June 21, 1974—a date that has lived in local infamy—U.S. District Court Judge W. Arthur Garrity Jr. ordered massive forced busing to integrate the Boston Public Schools. It was the shot heard 'round the city.

It is difficult to chart the stages of this urban earthquake or distinguish its aftershocks. But the initial tremors began when the U.S. Supreme Court released its ruling in *Brown vs. Board of Education* (1954). In *Brown*, Chief Justice Earl Warren claimed that segregation is psychologically harmful to black children and implied that all-black classrooms are inherently inferior. Warren's ambiguous opinion allowed lower courts and lawmakers to infer that stopping segregation was not enough, but that social justice depended upon integrating the races in school, at whatever cost to neighborhoods and to children, black and white.

By 1968, the courts were equating desegregation with massive, forced cross-city busing. In *Green vs. Board of Education*, Justice William Brennan ruled that there can no longer be black or white schools, "just schools," and that schools must integrate "now." Judges across America soon began to order busing to integrate urban school systems in the name of "racial equality." (In *Missouri vs. Jenkins* (1995), Justice Clarence Thomas marveled at this trend: "It never ceases to amaze me that the courts are so willing to assume that anything that is predominantly black must be inferior.")

In 1965, the Massachusetts state legislature passed the Racial Imbalance Act, which outlawed "racially imbalanced" schools, defined as any school whose student body was more than 50 percent minority. Every suburban legislator voted in favor of the Act; only those from Boston and Springfield voted against it.

For nine years, like a patient in denial about his

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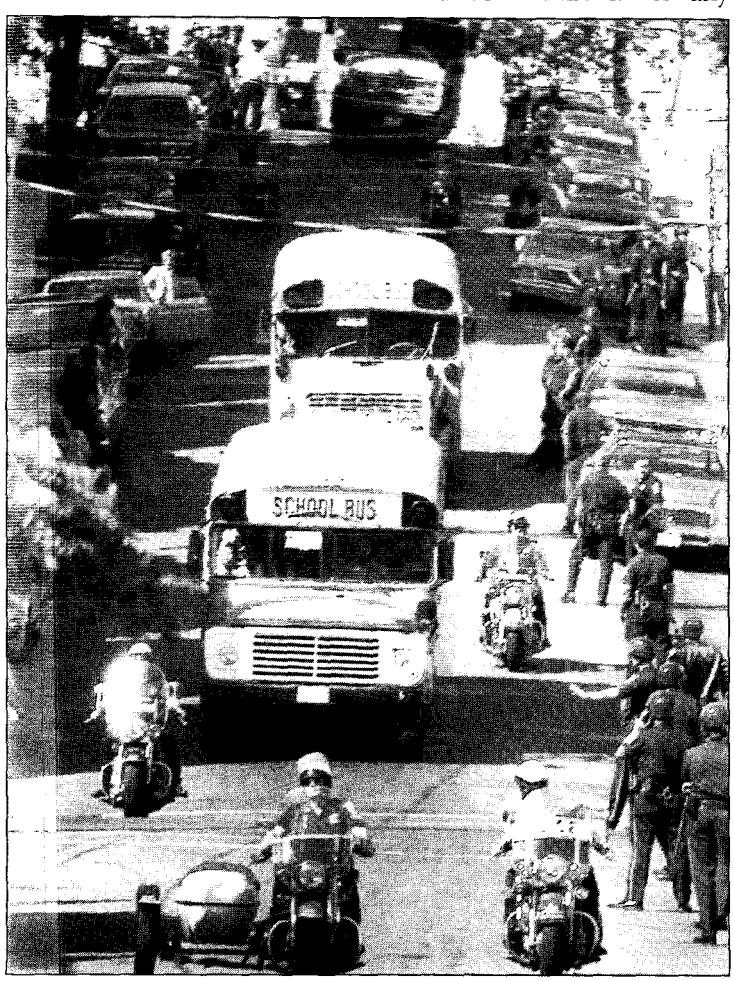
condition, the Boston School Committee pretended the Racial Imbalance Act did not exist. When the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) brought suit, Garrity found the Boston School Committee guilty of "segregative intent" by establishing a "dual school system" that deliberately separated black and white students and underfunded black schools. Although few could disagree with the judge's conclusion, his remedy shook the city to its foundations.

Garrity ordered the implementation of the Massachusetts State Board of Education's drastic "Master Plan" to achieve racial balance in the public schools. The Master Plan generally required students from designated white neighborhoods to be bused to schools in designated black neighborhoods and vice versa. But the plan's ugliest element was the cross-town busing of children attending South Boston and Roxbury high schools, exchanging students from Boston's most insular Irish Catholic neighborhood with students from the heart of the black ghetto.

The Master Plan, however, was only one of several options available to Garrity. For example, Boston school superintendent Frederick Gillis proposed an "open enrollment plan" that would have allowed families to send their children to any school in the city. This option would have been much more palatable to the public and far less costly than forced busing. But Garrity showed little interest. He gave the city only 11 weeks to prepare for the biggest social experiment in its history. Worse, six days after the court order, he unabashedly admitted he had not even read the Master Plan prior to ordering its implementation.

In *The Quest for Community*, Robert Nisbet wrote that the central crisis of the 20th century is the continuous assault on "natural authority" and community through the state's progressive invasion into our daily lives. "The alleged disorganization of the modern family is, in fact, simply an erosion of its natural authority, the consequence, in considerable part, of the absorption of its functions by other bodies, chiefly the state." Busing is a perfect example of such a state-sponsored assault on community and family.

Boston's neighborhood high schools, like South Boston High and Charlestown High, produced few college-bound graduates, but they did form the nucleus of neighborhood pride. Young boys and girls were eager to grow up and play sports or cheerlead for their local schools. The annual Thanksgiving Day "Southie-Eastie" football game between South Boston and East Boston high schools was an age-old ritual, typically thronged by crowds of more than 10,000. But these community traditions died and the people of South Boston and Charlestown could not understand why. It was these communities, whatever their flaws, that people were defending when fleets of buses began rolling past their front stoops in 1974.



Boston police escorted the first buses bringing black students into hostile white working-class neighborhoods, lending an air of martial law.

Photo by UPI / Corbis-Bettmann

"The Buses Are Coming!"

One of the ironies of busing in Boston is that it was fought during the 200th anniversary of some the most famous fights of the American Revolution, often on the very same battlefields. "We're right back where we began 200 years ago" read a banner raised in Charlestown's Monument Square, the site of both the Battle of Bunker Hill and Charlestown High School. South Boston High School is located on Dorchester Heights, the very soil made sacred by George Washington and his Irish infantry.

From its commanders to its foot soldiers, the anti-busing movement was dominated by women. They were mostly stay-at-home moms who wanted to regain control over their children's lives. These women had long taken for granted that their children could attend the schools in their community, that they had choices concerning their children's education. Busing was a gross assault on their "nat-

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ural authority." When asked why she was resisting busing, Charlestown anti-busing leader Peg Smith declared, "I want my freedom back. They took my freedom. They tell me where my kids have to go to school. This is like living in Russia. Next they'll tell you where to shop."

One day in fall 1975, about 400 Charlestown mothers marched up Bunker Hill Street, clutching rosary beads and reciting the "Hail Mary." They knelt in prayer for several minutes on the pavement between Charlestown High and the Bunker Hill Monument. And then they stood up and walked toward the police line, still in prayer, handbags held high to shield their faces. Soon a scuffle broke out between the mothers and the police. Some women were tossed to the ground.

Although the women's movement was on the rise, the feminist establishment had no interest in the working-class woman's struggle against forced busing. They were indifferent to the wailing mothers who where throwing themselves down in front of delivery trucks owned by the *Boston Globe* (the pro-busing newspaper) or fleeing from the dogs that police used to enforce curfews. The same people who celebrated when the Supreme Court recognized a woman's "right to choose" to have an abortion were unmoved when a federal court revoked a mother's right to choose where her children could go to school. When anti-busing mothers attended a rally for the Equal Rights Amendment downtown, one mother addressed the gathering to ask whether the ERA would guarantee a woman's authority over her children's schooling. They were all asked to leave.

Much of the anti-busing style of civil disobedience—the sit-ins, the picketing, the protest songs, even the riots—was inherited from the civil rights and anti-war movements that preceded it. But unlike the anti-war movement, these protesters never indulged in anti-Americanism. Busing opponents often sang patriotic songs at their rallies. They waved, not burned, American flags during nearly every demonstration. They consistently invoked the tradition of American liberty in their fight to retain it. Unfortunately, this sometimes resulted in a perverse blend of patriotism and racism, which culminated when a Charlestown youth literally speared a black attorney with a flag pole adorned with the Stars and Stripes at City Hall Plaza, a moment captured in a famous Pulitzer Prize-winning photograph.

The Battle of Busing

"Eighty percent of the people in Boston are against busing," said Mayor Kevin White. "If Boston were a sovereign state, busing would be cause for a revolution." On the 200th anniversary of the Declaration of Independence, Arthur Garrity ruled over Boston like a reincarnated King George. In the school system, his word was law and integration without representation had become the new tyranny.

Photo by Jim Nachtwey / *New York Times* / Archive Photos

Forced cross-town busing mixed some classrooms in Boston public schools, but at what cost to students and neighborhoods?

According to *Common Ground*, by J. Anthony Lukas, when White was warned of impending violence at an anti-busing march, he telephoned Garrity at his home to see if he would ban the march. But Garrity refused to speak to the mayor because he considered a call to his personal residence "inappropriate." "That arrogant ass!" White reportedly said. "He issues his damn order, then retires to his suburban estate and refuses to talk with the only guy who can make it work." After the mayor called Garrity's home a second time, the judge made White a co-defendant in the case.

An exhausted White later appeared in Garrity's courtroom and implored him to deploy federal marshals to help safeguard public order. But Garrity dismissed the mayor's plea and insisted that "integration in the schools can be achieved by community efforts." The judge was apparently less confident in community efforts to safeguard his own home in Wellesley, however, as two deputy federal marshals stood guard there around the clock. Nor did Garrity's faith in local government extend to South Boston High, where he micromanaged everything from student transfers to ordering the purchase of 12 MacGregor basketballs.

"Sometimes when I look out this window," White reportedly said to an aide during one hellish day at the office, "I see Belfast out there." Police had to escort and unload buses at several Boston high schools every morning and afternoon while snipers stood guard on the surrounding rooftops. Metal detectors were installed and troopers patrolled the cafeterias, hallways, and stairwells, and still racial brawls broke out daily. Garrity also ordered equal numbers of black and white police officers to guard the schools, provoking racial hostil-

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ity even within the police force. "It'll be lucky if the Boston police don't kill each other before the day is out," said one state trooper at the time. For three years, as many as 300 state police officers a day patrolled South Boston High. One teacher compared the school to a prison: "We can't leave school, we can't come early or on the weekends to do preparatory work. We are like prisoners. Everyday when I get up, it's like getting up to go to prison."

In some 400 orders, Garrity meddled in every aspect of the Boston Public Schools. He placed South Boston High into federal receivership and fired its popular principal. He decreed rigid racial quotas in faculty and administrative hiring. When one elementary school was converted to a middle school, Garrity issued an order requiring the urinals to be raised.

Although the temperature of local race relations had been rising in recent years, busing pushed it above the boiling point. What was once a generally idle racial animus between blacks and whites swelled into seething bigotry. When the buses pulled up to high schools in white neighborhoods, police had to escort black teenagers through a gauntlet of thrown rocks and bottles; the students heard shouts of "Die, niggers, die!" and saw signs that read "Bus Them Back to Africa!" If segregation was psychologically harmful to black students, as the Supreme Court had it, how much more harmful was busing?

Yet Adrienne Weston, a black West Indies native who had enjoyed teaching at South Boston High School prior to busing, told a journalist that white rioters outside South Boston High were motivated by much more than racism. "Those people out there are crazy," she said, "because they don't like this being shoved down their throats."

Indeed, whites were not the only Bostonians choking on it. Polls taken during the early days of busing show that only bare majorities of blacks favored the policy. In 1971, when the district tried to redraw attendance zones to encourage integration, a group of black parents protested that it would force their kids out of a good neighborhood school. Leo Conway, the principal of an all-black elementary school in Roxbury popular with parents and students, wrote to Garrity to save his school from being closed under the Master Plan and to complain "that the burden of desegregation has been too long placed on the back of the Roxbury and Jamaica Plain community." In the South End, parents at the Bancroft Elementary School, which had integrated voluntarily, also wrote to Garrity to keep their kids in their neighborhood school. In fact, only days before Garrity's decision, black legislators had been pushing for more community control over the schools, not busing.

In 1985, Boston school superintendent Robert Spillane resigned in frustration because Garrity was always peering over his shoulder. The eighth superintendent in 10 years, Spillane complained to the *Globe* that the judge "had a paternalistic mentality that all goodness and all knowledge flows from the federal court." On September 3, 1985, Garrity finally turned authority over the Boston Public Schools to the Massachusetts Board of Education. He had ruled for more than 11 years. "I'll miss it," he said, describing the experience as "rewarding and inspiring." Garrity still serves on the U.S. District Court, where he retains "standby jurisdiction" over the school system.

Busing's Bitter Fruits

During Garrity's tenure as *de facto* school superintendent, public-school enrollment dropped from 93,000 to 57,000 and the proportion of white students shrank from 65 percent of total enrollment to 28 percent. Seventy-eight school buildings closed their doors, including Roxbury High. Now whites make up 17 percent of public-school students; most of them attend one of the three selective "exam schools" like the Boston Latin School. Boston has been forced to lower its official threshold for the acceptable racial balance of each school from a minimum of 50 percent white in 1965 to a minimum of 9 percent white today.

Busing has not only failed to integrate Boston schools, it has also failed to improve education opportunities for the city's black children. When Boston introduced Stanford 9 testing to the public schools in 1996, 94 percent of seventh-graders at Woodrow Wilson Elementary School scored "poor" or "failing" in math, as did 73 percent of fifth-graders at Brighton's Alexander Hamilton School. At Dorchester's William E. Endicott School, 95 percent of the fifth-graders scored "poor" or "failing" in reading and 100 percent scored "poor" or "failing" in math. Yet all of these students were promoted to the next grade.

One schools chief resigned, saying that Judge Garrity "had a paternalistic mentality that all goodness and all knowledge flow from the federal court."

On the statewide Iowa Reading Test, the Boston Public Schools ranked 275 out of the 279 cities and towns in Massachusetts. Even the working-class city of Lawrence, with a large immigrant population and a high crime rate, outscored the Boston Public Schools despite the fact that Lawrence teachers make almost $15,000 less on average than Boston teachers.

For whatever reason, Garrity exempted a handful of schools from the Master Plan. It is telling that four of Boston's top five elementary schools in 1996 happen to be institutions that respect the

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"natural authority" of the parents. Two are neighborhood schools in East Boston; Chinatown's Josiah Quincy Elementary School, with a mostly Asian enrollment, achieved the second-highest average scores in the city. At Dorchester's Patrick O'Hearn Elementary School, which achieved the highest scores, children may enroll only if their parents promise to be actively involved in the school. Most of the city's 33,000 elementary schoolchildren, however, are still bused among the 71 schools that scored poorly on the Stanford 9, learning little or nothing and winning social promotion year after year.

On the Scholastic Assessment Test (SAT), Boston fares even worse. On average, SAT test takers in the city's high schools scored 845 (out of 1600) in 1996, surpassing only those in Chelsea. If you exclude the three exam schools, Boston would surely be last. With pathetic standardized test scores and an average promotion rate of 94 percent, it is hard to imagine the Boston Public Schools have improved since busing began. In fact, the evidence suggests they are probably worse.

Such poor educational outcomes hardly seem to justify the costs of desegregation. When Martin Walsh, a Justice Department consultant to Garrity, was told that the first four years of busing cost the city more than $77 million, he grandly proclaimed, "You can't put a dollar value on correcting constitutional wrongs." Indeed, the price continues to rise every year. The 1998 busing budget exceeds $45 million (one dollar out of every 12 in the school budget goes to transportation). The total 25-year cost of busing runs into the hundreds of millions of dollars. City Councilor Peggy Davis-Mullen claims that ending forced busing would save the city $20 million annually on transportation. If families had greater choice in education, they could opt for schools closer to home, reducing the need for school buses.

After Garrity's departure, Boston switched to a "controlled choice" system that Abigail Thernstrom, a Manhattan Institute scholar and a member of the state Board of Education, describes in *America in Black and White* as "long on control, short on choice." It is really a "coerced choice": Parents are guaranteed their first or second preference, but are allowed to choose only from among schools where their child will not upset the racial balance. And so the kids keep riding the buses.

Voices in the Wilderness

Boston's busing disaster demonstrates economist Thomas Sowell's point that "the black family—which survived slavery, discrimination, poverty, wars, and depressions—began to come apart as the federal government moved in with its well-financed programs to 'help.'" Busing was imposed on citizens in the name of racial equality, but few public policies have harmed Boston's black community more. Roxbury resident Loretta Roach is the chairwoman of the Citywide Educational Coalition, a group that supports public education. Roach bemoans the extent to which busing impedes black parental involvement in the "often faraway schools their children are bused to every morning." Community support for public schools has also "evaporated since schools are no longer part of their communities. Busing destroyed the neighborhood passion for those schools that

The End of Busing?

Nearly 30 years have passed since federal courts began ordering forced busing to integrate America's public schools. Since then, many school districts have soured on this approach to making black students less separate and more equal. The doubts these days are likely to come from within the black community, in part because there is scant evidence that racial balancing has improved blacks' educational opportunities.

Many school districts have already returned to a system of neighborhood schools, or are poised to do so. In 1995, a federal court allowed Denver's school district to end busing. The district argued that white flight had made racial balance within schools increasing hard to achieve and that busing wasn't closing the gap between minority and white test scores. "The burden now should be on giving those kids the best education that they can receive in the school closest to their home," said Mayor Wellington Webb, who is black.

Seattle, Oklahoma City, and Norfolk, Virginia, have ended cross-town busing for reasons similar to Denver's. And Cleveland, Dallas, Nashville, Buffalo, and Wilmington, Delaware, have all received court permission to end their busing programs.

"African Americans are saying busing is not their cry. They are concerned about quality education and aren't convinced you need artificially integrated schools," Connecticut NAACP president Ben F. Andrews Jr. told the *Hartford Courant* last year. Andrews is among several local civil rights officials who disagree with their national leadership's support for busing. John Henderson, the NAACP chapter president in Tulsa, Oklahoma, says he firmly opposes forced busing because black students are "treated like cattle."

Just a few months ago, the local NAACP chapter actually helped Prince George's County in Maryland win the right to end cross-district busing and return to neighborhood schools. Tired of seeing their county produce the second-worst test scores in the state, black parents and school administrators felt education funding could be better spent on improving quality rather than transporting their children all over the district for the sake of racial diversity. "We need to redefine what desegregation is," says Alvin Thornton, the chairman of Prince George's County School Board, who devised the neighborhood-schools plan. "It's about making the black child whole—even if that means educating them in schools that happen to be all black."

—Jason Boffetti

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previously existed." Gwendolyn Collins-Stevens, a Roxbury mother of six, agrees. "Busing took away the community feeling we had for our neighborhood schools," she says, "the feeling of 'It's our school and we love it.'"

"When schools were segregated, they were rich in other ways," says Angela Paige Cook, founder of Paige Academy, a private school in Roxbury. Cook recalls the old network of neighborhood schools as the spring that made the black community tick. "Before busing, parents, teachers, and students often lived in the same community, attended the same churches, and shopped in the same stores. There were more positive role models for the kids in those days. When you destroy a community infrastructure, you no longer have those role models."

Wellington Webb, Denver's popular black mayor, sees the end of forced busing as a perfect opportunity to revitalize his city's quest for community. "Having neighborhood schools back will help rebuild the neighborhoods," said Webb after Denver ended busing in 1996. But a return to neighborhood schools might not be an option for Boston's black community, since so many of the 78 schools that closed during desegregation were in black neighborhoods. So for the foreseeable future, the best alternative to forced busing may be open enrollment throughout the city.

Public Be Damned

In 1982, more than 200 frustrated black parents formed the Black Parent Committee to petition Garrity to substitute a school-choice plan for busing. As newspapers reported at the time, these concerned parents complained about the injustice of "asking children to get up at 6 A.M. to ride a bus to a hostile environment where they are not going to get a good education." Plaintiff Richard Yarde insisted that most blacks "never thought busing was the way to resolve inequality in the schools." Like their white counterparts across town, black parents resented government usurpation of their "natural authority." A 1982 *Boston Globe* poll found that 79 percent of black parents with children in the public schools favored an open-enrollment plan over forced busing. In fact, 42 percent of those polled said they did not even favor busing in 1974.

The Boston chapter of the NAACP, however, moved quickly to scuttle the Black Parent Committee's attempt to dismantle forced busing. "Constitutional decrees aren't overturned by plebiscites," declared chapter president Tom Atkins at the time. Such intransigence over integration, however, is growing less popular within the NAACP. Although the Boston chapter and the national leadership still support forced busing, other members have publicly broken ranks (see box, page 46).

Even Garrity eventually recognized some of the inequities of busing. In 1976, he ordered a 35 percent minority quota at Boston's three exam schools. In 1995, a white father sued the school system because his daughter was denied admission to the Boston Latin School due to her race. The case was decided in Garrity's courtroom. Surprisingly, he ordered the girl admitted; although he stopped short of banning it, he described as "constitutionally suspect" the very quota system he had conjured up 19 years earlier.

The Crack-Up

Today, the ghost of busing past continues to haunt the present. You see it when you pass by White Stadium during the Southie-Eastie Thanksgiving Day football game, where only a handful of onlookers sit in the stands once thronged by thousands of faithful fans. These communities have suffered something like a death in the family whose members, in order to go on, must maintain the pretense of living as if they had lost no one.

Somehow the birthplace of the American Revolution and the abolitionist movement has become perhaps the most segregated city in America.

The aftershocks of busing are not confined to Boston's tight-knit neighborhoods. Here, unlike New York City or Washington, D.C., it is rare to see any blacks downtown. Only whites patronize the restaurants and bars of Back Bay and Beacon Hill. Somehow the birthplace of the American Revolution and of the abolitionist movement has become perhaps the most segregated city in America. True, busing alone did not create the cultural chasm that separates the races, but it did much to widen it. "Before busing, we went to South Boston," says Gwendolyn Collins-Smith. "We had white friends there—one of my foster sisters lived in the D Street public-housing projects. But after busing came, friends were at each other's throats. I don't go there anymore."

June 21, 1999, will mark the 25th anniversary of a tragedy of unintended consequences. In the name of social engineering, one federal judge usurped the sovereignty of an entire city and frayed bonds of community built up over generations.

In 1976, the city of Boston celebrated the Bicentennial of American independence while stricken by civil and racial strife. It would befit the silver anniversary of busing to observe a moment of silence, for all the children, past and present, forced to ride the school bus, and for the people of Boston who have suffered through an urban nightmare from which they are still trying to awake.

***Matthew Richer**, a native of Boston, Massachusetts, is a graduate student in intellectual history.*

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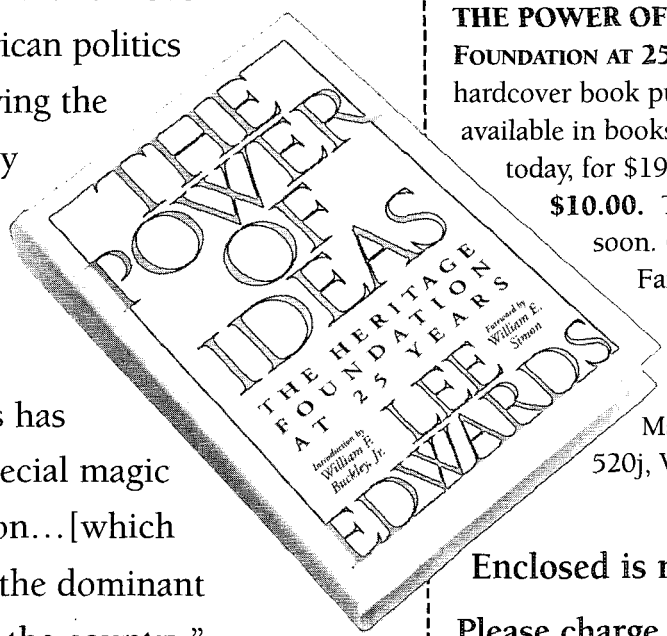

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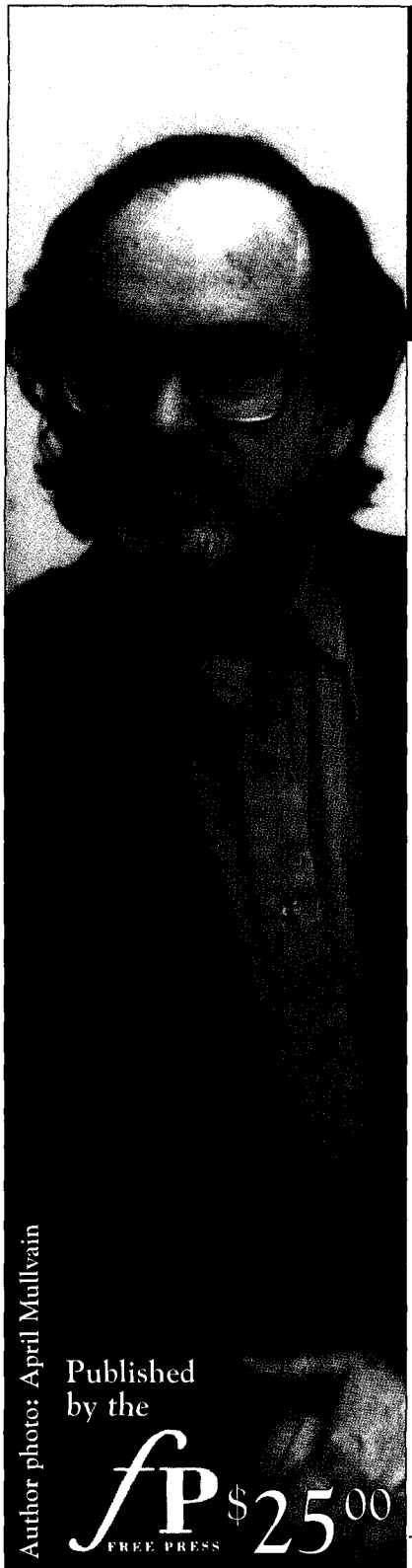

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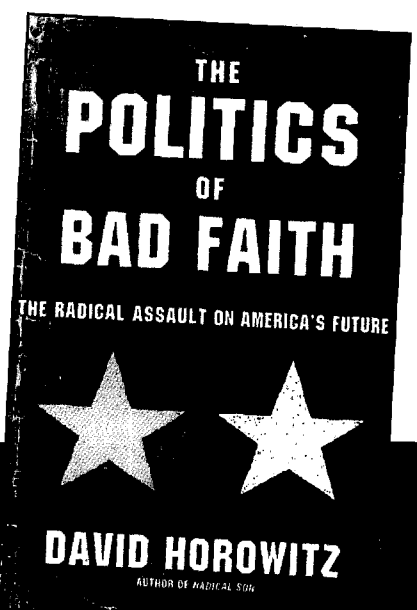

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